

AUSTRALIAN yoga JOURNAL

LIFE IN BALANCE

87 poses to
revitalise
& inspire

THE LIFE OF BRYAN
Bryan Kest in Oz

HEALING
from the
HEART

An inspiring tale **p42**

The Bikram
Scandal
An Inside Story

Yoga for
athletes **p20**

Travel
Eat, Yoga
Surf, Repeat

**THE #1 WAY
TO SLEEP
BETTER**

Mindful Dating
A Yogi's Guide

10 Delicious
Vegetarian
Recipes

+ Home practice,
anatomy, Adho
Mukha Vrksasana &
ethical fashion

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 **byronyogacentre**

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credits Photographed by Greg Smith of iKapture. Hair/makeup: Michael Huxley. Cover Design: Brett Moffatt

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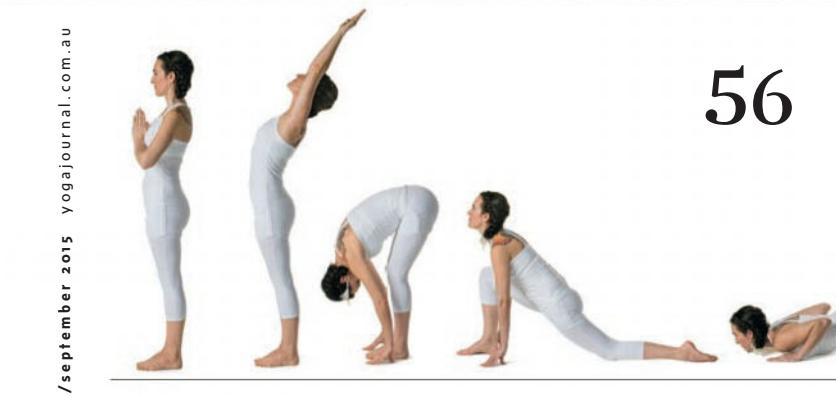
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September 17 - December 6

WELLINGTON, NZ
September 23 - December 6

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Introducing...

It takes a lot of people to make a magazine: writers, designers, photographers, editors. We'd like to introduce some of the people who put this issue together.



Carrie-Anne Fields

Carrie is the owner of My Health Group and a level 3 senior yoga teacher. She has trained all over the world and holds a degree in psychology. Her main love is deep meditation. Carrie cheerfully assists AYJ as our vigilant sub-editor.



Jessica Humphries

Jessica is a yoga teacher, writer and philosopher living in Byron Bay. She has completed two teacher trainings and has been studying yoga and philosophy for over 12 years. Jessica wrote the insightful dating article on page 36.



Alison Cole

Alison is the tireless publisher of the magazine, meaning she runs the business. Alison worked in PR, sponsorship and ad sales before becoming a mother of twins boys and a daughter. She took up Hatha yoga last year.



Julitta Overdijk

Julitta is the art director of the magazine. With great care and skill, she creates the look of the magazine. Julitta has been working on magazines for 20 years and practicing Iyengar yoga for 12. She has recently started distance running.



Karen Farell

Karen is a proud mama of two teenage boys, a yoga teacher and owner of Yoga Avenue studio. Karen is a public relations specialist and former magazine editor. Karen crafted the Bryan Kest profile on page 38.



Dr. Tamsin Angus-Leppan

Yoga teacher and now university researcher, Tamsin first tried yoga while preparing for the world rowing championships in 1991. Tamsin skillfully pens the profile on page 98 and loves her new role as a mum, at 47.



Lorraine Rushton

With 20 year's experience Lorraine is a leading authority on yoga for children. She currently trains yoga teachers and school teachers who work with children. Lorraine writes the parenting column on page 26.



Karen Warner

Karen is a TV executive producer who has steered *Getaway*, *Farmer Wants a Wife* and *Celebrity Apprentice* to ratings gold. A Bikram devotee and keen surfer, Karen wrote the Bali travel piece on page 32.



Todd Cole

Todd is a writer and editor of 25 year's experience, having launched *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness* and *Eat Fit* in Oz. A one-time navy diver, Todd came late to yoga from CrossFit. Todd is acting editor while we search for someone who isn't so cranky. ;)



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connect TALK TO US

CD or not CD?

I've been an avid reader of *Yoga Journal* since I discovered it five years ago. I often use the pose sequences in my classes and the articles to refine my own practice. I also have a stack of the magazines in my class which the ladies take home and swap. After attending a weekend yoga retreat eating only raw food we all wanted to change our diet (though not too drastically) and find your recipes inspirational and delicious. One thing which started me reading were the free music CD's which I still use in my classes. Is there any chance you may be bringing them back? Keep up the good work.

KATHY GREENSIDES, NZ
We are looking at its viability for the future, Kathy. But right now if you subscribe you can get 5 CDs as your free gift. See page 90. – YJ

Small Type

I have been buying *Australian Yoga Journal* since day one. It is a great yoga forum. I notice that the print is very, very tiny in the latest edition (Issue 44). I realise you are not aiming the magazine at the older demographic although there are many older yogis around Australia, of which I am one. Not so good eyesight is not only the older generation.

ELANORE, WA
Elanore, we aim AYJ at every demographic. We take on board what you say. Thank you.

Very Upset

...You won't win me back as a subscriber. I can't be bothered with a woman's magazine that disguises itself as a publication about yoga... I'm absolutely disappointed with the way that this former great magazine has taken.

NAME WITHHELD

We are trying to make yoga accessible to as many people as possible. The more people doing

yoga, the happier, healthier, kinder and safer the world would be. So yes, we have made (and will continue to make) changes to this great magazine to make it appealing to a more people. We do, however, have the utmost respect for your decision. We wish you bountiful happiness and love on your life's journey. YJ

Loving It

My name is Bree and I have been buying your magazine on and off for a while. I am a personal trainer who works at a small group training based studio and for a while I just felt stuck doing the same thing over and over watching people come through who were in need of something more than just a 'fitness fix' and I felt the same. I bought your last issue and at this moment, it feels like everything is right, this is what I needed at this point in my life.

It is a beautiful thing be a part of something bigger and something that connects the spirit and body together. I am very much wanting to become a yoga teacher now as I feel this is the right time and the right move for my personal development and goals. Thanks for helping me realize what I want and what I need!

BREE. VIA EMAIL

You are welcome Bree. It makes us very happy to know we've helped you realise your goal. YJ



We want to hear from you! Email your thoughts, photos, ideas and requests to editor@yogajournal.com.au



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What's happening in the world of yoga...

Meditation Training

Brookfield, QLD **August 7 - 24**

YIMI (yoga & integrative medicine institute) are running an 8-day meditation course in two parts. Run by senior yoga teachers Celia Roberts and Leanne Davis, the course delves deep into mindfulness-based meditation. The intense course covers subjects like, Meditation as a Therapy: Physiological and Psychological Conditions; Positive Emotional Mindfulness: Wise Mind, Pure Mind; The Science of Compassion and the Power of Deep Presence. Book now at www.yimi.com.au.

See the Light

Melbourne **August 22 - 23rd**

Titled *Discovering and Living From Your Impersonal Self*, this weekend course features Dr Wayne W Dyer and Anita Moorjani. The seminar is an opportunity to free yourself, now and forever, from the domination of your personality, with its self-inflated and often self-sabotaging mind and intellect. The course explores the notion that in addition to having a personal self, there is also an impersonal self that is with you for every moment of your existence in this lifetime. This impersonal self is not your intellect and body. It is the invisible intelligence that animates all of life. It is responsible for all of your desires.

www.hayhouse.com.au

Ski and Yoga Retreat



Falls Creek **13 - 18 September**

Designed to nourish and nurture, the Trackers Yoga Retreat will give you the opportunity to deepen your practice, deliver you a renewed sense of physical and mental wellness, plus leaving you plenty of time during the day to ski, taste the delights of the village, explore our unique alpine setting or just unwind with a book. www.trackers.com.au.

YogaFest 2015

Brisbane **October 3 & 4**

YogaFest 2015 presents 5 Yoga halls offering yoga, dance, music, and other informing and entertaining workshops over two joy-filled days. Australia's largest celebration of Yoga, YogaFest brings together Yoga enthusiasts Australia wide to celebrate their love of Yoga at the annual two-day festival. A large array of indoor and outdoor market stalls and delicious, healthy food. www.yogafest.com.au

Super Retreat

Govinda Valley NSW **October 7 - 11**

The Super Retreat has been designed for practitioners to go deeper into their yoga practice. Australia's finest trainers will come together for one program run over 5 days and 4 nights in the seclusion and pristine surrounds of Govinda Valley, NSW. Learn from 11 of Australia's leading yoga teacher-trainers in a series of 2-3 hour in-depth presentations covering all aspects of the teachings and traditions of yoga. Presenters include: Michelle Merrifield, (on our cover), Nicole Walsh, Simon Borg Olivier, John Oglivy, Nikky Knoff to name a few. www.superretreat.com.au

Pure Joy



**Byron Bay
October 12 - November 24**
Rachel Zinman and John Weddepohl formulated ISHTAM. Not another style of Yoga, ISHTAM is a system of teaching rooted in the Upanishadic tradition. ISHTAM's physical practices combined with self-knowledge lead to an understanding that abundant joy and happiness are already yours. Be part of a teacher training that takes you through the depth of anatomy and ayurveda to the total understanding of yoga and the body.

www.rachelzinmanyoga.com

Got an event on? Send your event details to editor@yogajournal.com.au along with a high quality photograph.

Yoga in Cambodia



Cambodia **October 17 - 24**

Discover breath-taking Angkor Wat, the floating villages of Tonle Sap Lake, amazing Angkor Thom, Cambodian culture and cuisine whilst enjoying daily expert yoga interspersed with rest, relaxation and pampering. This stress-free, ethically based holiday is perfect for hectic professionals looking to explore, experience, recharge and reinvigorate. For dates and details: www.explore yogatravel.com

Evolve Yoga Festival



Melbourne **25th October**

Featuring local and international yoga instructors and leaders of wellness offering an exciting range of workshops, the Evolve Yoga Festival is a unique fusion of music, yoga, dance, health and more. Whether you are an experienced yogi or simply curious to learn more about this practice that is transforming the lives of so many people, the Evolve program will excite, challenge and inspire your own yoga practice. www.evolveyogafestival.com

Yoga Nidra Teaching Training

Melbourne **12-20 November**

Prana House are conducting a teacher training course and certification in Yoga Nidra. (If you don't know what it is, turn to page 44.) The course will equip teachers with powerful and effective tools to take students to the most relaxing stress-free space within. If you are a practitioner of any modality, you may also be looking for that tool which addresses the body mind fragmentation so that you can begin to live a life in a peaceful and empowered state. If this resonates with you, check out www.pranahouse.com.au

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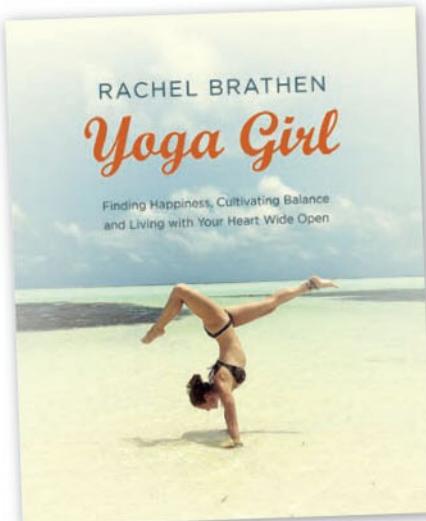
For tickets and more information
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or scan the QR code





World's longest tree pose chain?

Last month an army of 50 yoga enthusiasts assembled on a Bundaberg beach with their colourful yoga mats. Stretching their way along the pristine shoreline, the group of 50 participants reached their arms to the sky and their hands to each other at an attempt to form the longest continuous line of Vrksasana (Tree pose). Led by Carmen Lee-Schneider of Love Life Live Yoga, future yogis of all ages stretched, twisted and flowed their way through an invigorating vinyasa sequence before standing together and demonstrated the true meaning of the day's event-building community. Carmen said: "It is my dream to build a community and to offer opportunities like this for people to come together. It is not just about yoga. It is about loving life and enjoying a healthy way to be."



@Yoga_Girl

Yoga teacher Rachel Brathen (aka Yoga Girl) has racked up well over one million followers on Instagram thanks to her unique blend of enchanting wisdom, child-like

enthusiasm for life and magnificent images of her doing advanced yoga poses in pristine tropical locations. *Yoga Girl* has now released a beautiful self-titled book that details her story, her lovely attitude, recipes and pose instruction. Rachel tells for the first time about the breakup of her family, her chaotic self-destructive teenage years and how she discovered peace and happiness through yoga. It's a surprisingly charming book that reminds you every minute should be savoured with gratitude and love. *Yoga Girl: Finding Happiness, Cultivating Balance and Living with Your Heart Wide Open* is published by Hachette and retails for \$39.99.

Does Yoga Need More Regulation?

A culture of social media and narcissism, as well as a lack of regulation, is a challenge for the practice of yoga in Australia, according to yoga teacher and PhD student Gina Woodhill, who is studying the practice of yoga in Canberra. She is calling for more regulation of the yoga industry, currently worth around \$10 billion a year world-wide, and for better training of yoga teachers. As the industry expands, Ms Woodhill believes it needs more structure. "We need a governing body where the requirements to become a yoga teacher are increased, so that the qualification has the depth of a three-year degree," she said.

"It's a surprisingly charming book that reminds you every minute should be savoured with gratitude."

Music to Our Ears

Deva Premal & Miten have released an exquisite new album called Songs for the Sangha. With over 1.5 million albums sales (their digital sales have significantly eclipsed that figure), they are extremely popular. Fans include Cher, Eckhart Tolle, and the Dalai Lama. After hearing their music His Holiness the Dalai Lama exclaimed: "... Beautiful, beautiful music...!" Available on iTunes.



18%

The decreased risk of developing type 2 diabetes when you up your daily consumption of plain or flavoured yoghurt to 300 grams. The probiotics in yoghurt *may* help improve insulin sensitivity and reduce inflammation. Testing continues.



Stinky Mat?

Bikram Yoga teacher Alison Roberts loves her yoga but hears a lot of complaints about "the smell". You can't expect to sweat buckets in a warm environment without fermenting a little odour causing bacteria. Alison discovered the powerful antibacterial properties of our Aussie grown Lemon Myrtle. Says Alison, "This stuff is amazing, edible, healing for skin, kills germs and smells lemony friggen awesome." But would it work? It would be bad karma to sell snake oil to yogis, she reasoned, so she teamed up with Dr. Vromen, the top organic chemist in his field. He knows the secret to working with essential oils and made the lemony mist strong enough to kill germs and yet be kind to skin. DETOX was born. www.wyldmyrtle.com.au



*sthira
sukham
asanam*

2.46 Patanjali

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& strong.

be gentle
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In Awesome Health

Marveling at a wow-worthy ocean view, mountain vista, or starry sky may give your immune system a boost, report University of California, Berkeley, researchers in the journal *Emotion*. They found that healthy people who experienced more positive feelings, particularly the emotion of awe, had lower levels of cytokines, proteins that in healthy levels support the immune system, but that can lead to inflammation and disease when levels are chronically high. While the exact link between awe and healthy cytokine levels is unknown, researchers believe that witnessing nature is one of the best ways to spark the emotion and its immune-supporting benefits. No wonder taking the scenic route feels so good! NANCY RONES

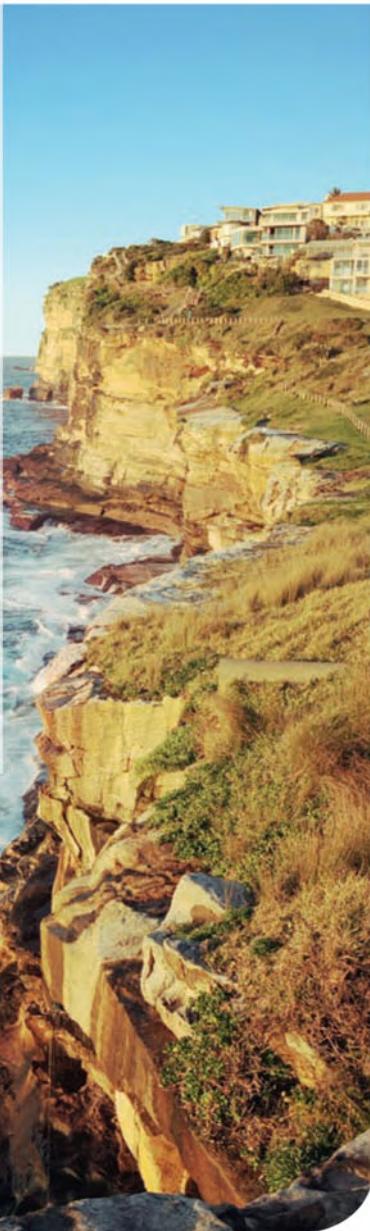


Just sayin'...

Every year the American College of Sports Medicine conducts a survey to predict health and fitness trends globally. In this year's survey, 39 potential fitness trends were presented to 28,426 fitness professionals. Yoga moved from number 20 to number 7. Just sayin'.

His Perfect Yoga Mat for Father's Day?

Is that a yoga mat on your back? Nope, it's party time! The Cooler Tube from mountainsmith (www.mountainsmith.com) may look like a yoga mat, but it's actually a beer cooler that holds six cans. Just don't mix it up when you go to class. USD \$24.00



Quiet Time

They're not cheap, but they are amazing. Bose have just released the remarkable Bose QuietComfort 20 acoustic, noise-cancelling headphones. The *completely* block out any sound other than what you're listening to. And we mean completely. You can listen to a guided meditation on a rickety train or crowded bus or while the kids run amok and be blissfully unaware of anything except the meditation. At nearly \$400, they're a huge investment, but they will change your world. Available from good hi-fi dealers. Bose.com.au

"Marveling at a wow-worthy ocean view, may give your immune system a boost."

80%

The percentage more arsenic contained in brown rice compared to white rice, according to a recent report.

The solution: wash it thoroughly before cooking.



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LEE HOLMES, Holistic Nutritionist, Whole-Foods Chef and Author
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arm **CANDY**

Body art can be beautiful, but if you're not ready to commit to something permanent, trendy temporary tattoo jewellery may be just your thing. These ornate, nontoxic, metallic designs look like actual accessories or tattoos, can last up to a week, and are able to withstand a sweaty hot yoga class or dip in the ocean (though not oily skin-care products). We love the layered Indian-style motifs from the Indigo collection by Lulu DK (luludk.com.au), and the bohemian Tribe of Jewels necklaces (cameonouveau.com). And to combine good fashion sense with doing good, don the henna-inspired Flash Tattoos Sheebani bangles (flashtat.com), which yield a 5-percent donation from your purchase to The Miracle Foundation, a nonprofit that works to help orphans in India. —YELENA MOROZ ALPERT



poses for snowboarding

By Erin Hardy



High Lunge

GOOD FOR toning the entire leg, improving coordination, and stretching the hip flexors

Start from Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose) and step your right foot forward between your hands. Bring arms overhead. Bend front knee deeply so that it's directly over the ankle, and press through the back heel. Gently square the hips forward, lengthen the tailbone down, and draw the lower belly up. Find a focal point and hold for 10 breaths. Switch sides.

Utkatasana (Chair Pose) with block

GOOD FOR toning the quadriceps, inner thighs, feet, and core; helps promote proper knee alignment

Stand with feet hip-width apart and place a block on its narrow side between your thighs. Bend your knees and lower your hips to take a seat. Squeeze the block and check that kneecaps are tracking straight over the second and third toes. Shift weight into heels as you draw the lower belly up. Hold for 5 breaths. Shift weight into balls of the feet, lift your heels, and hold for 5 more breaths.



It takes tremendous strength, balance, and focus to charge down a mountain while strapped to a board alternating between your heel and toe edge, absorbing—or launching from—bumps along the way. This means snowboarders who spend time on the yoga mat are better prepared for a graceful, injury-free season of riding. “Yoga helps snowboarders develop body awareness and deliberate movement patterns, so they can advance in the sport, whether they’re experts or novice, once-a-year mountain-goers,” says Nicole Mucciolo, a yoga teacher to snowboarders of all skill levels in Vail, Colorado. Get started with these poses that strengthen your feet, tone your quads, and help protect your knees for many rides to come. Happy shredding!



Virasana (Hero Pose) with block and mat

GOOD FOR stretching thighs, knees, and ankles; strengthens back and core muscles

Kneel with your legs close together, and place a rolled mat behind your knees and a block between feet. Sit back on block, rest hands on thighs, and bring index finger to thumb in Gyan Mudra (targets base chakra for a sense of calm). Lift the crown of your head. Hold for 10 breaths.

Utkata Konasana (Goddess Pose) with arms in prayer

GOOD FOR toning the feet and legs, coordinating balance, and building upper-back strength

Take a wide stance; pull heels in slightly and point toes outward. Bend your knees and sit down so thighs are parallel to the ground. Track knees over second and third toes. Press your thighs back while pressing pubic bone forward and pulling lower belly up. Lift chest and bring hands together in prayer. Hold for 10 breaths.



Our Pro Writer and model **Erin Hardy** teaches a Yoga for Snowboarders workshop at her studio, The Yoga Mat, in Denver.

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Pressed for success

The trick to transforming panini from glorified grilled cheese into something really special is adding a single, versatile condiment that will dress up a variety of fillings. Black olive tapenade is the perfect fit—it pairs well with meat, fish, cheese, and veggies, and it's super simple to make.

Recipes by Charity Ferreira

OMNIVORE/PESCETARIAN

tuna panini with fennel and tapenade

SERVES 1

Trim the ends of a fennel bulb and cut in half for easier handling, then use a vegetable peeler to shave thin slices.

- 1 tbsp olive tapenade (recipe below)
- 1–2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 slices bread
- ½ 6 oz can chunk light tuna, unsalted
- ¼ cup shaved fennel slices

Spread tapenade on one slice of bread and mustard on the other slice. Fill bread slices with remaining ingredients; cook in a hot sandwich press until bread is toasted and golden brown, 2–4 minutes.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 364 calories, 9 g fat (1 g saturated), 47 g carbs, 6 g fiber, 26 g protein, 866 mg sodium

VEGETARIAN

roasted red pepper panini with spinach and tapenade

SERVES 1

Jarred roasted red capsicums are sold at most supermarkets. Drain well and slice into 0.5 cm strips.

- 1 tbsp olive tapenade (recipe below)
- 2 slices bread
- ¼ cup baby spinach leaves
- ¼ cup roasted red capsicum strips
- 2 slices fontina or white cheddar cheese

Spread tapenade on one slice of bread. Fill bread slices with remaining ingredients; cook in a hot sandwich press until bread is toasted and cheese melts, 3–5 minutes.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 392 calories, 17 g fat (7 g saturated), 41 g carbs, 4 g fiber, 15 g protein, 925 mg sodium

Best breads

When it comes to panini, opt for a sturdy and artisan-quality bread, so it holds together in the press. Try whole-wheat sourdough, ciabatta, or country-style levain.

VEGAN

baked eggplant panini with artichokes and tapenade

SERVES 1

To prevent a soggy sandwich, drain and blot dry the artichoke hearts.

- 1 small eggplant or Japanese eggplant, sliced
- ¾ tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp balsamic vinegar
- ½ of a baguette or 2 slices bread
- 1 tbsp olive tapenade (recipe below)
- 2 tbsp chopped artichoke hearts from a jar
- ¼ cup rocket leaves

Heat oven to 350°F. In a bowl, toss eggplant slices with olive oil and balsamic vinegar; season with salt and black pepper. Bake on a cookie sheet until tender and brown, 15–20 minutes.

Slice baguette in half horizontally and use your fingers to pull out a little of the soft bread inside to hollow a space for the filling. Spread tapenade on one side of the baguette. Fill baguette with remaining ingredients; cook in a hot sandwich press until the bread is toasted and golden brown, 2–4 minutes.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 354 calories, 17 g fat (2 g saturated), 46 g carbs, 7 g fiber, 9 g protein, 651 mg sodium

Black olive tapenade

In a food processor, pulse 2 cups pitted kalamata black olives, 1 small garlic clove, and 2 tbsp olive oil into a coarse, roughly chopped paste. For more flavor, add one or more of the following and pulse until combined: 1 tbsp capers, 1 tsp orange zest, a splash of lemon juice. Makes about 1½ cups; store extra in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.



International Yoga Teachers Association



WHY TRAIN WITH IYTA



Simon Borg-Olivier -
world-renowned master yogi and IYTA lecturer

Simon has been a long-term friend and respected peer of the IYTA. Simon is one of the IYTA lecturers on the Level Two (advanced) Yoga Teaching. He is passionate about bringing the knowledge of the physiology of yoga to experienced

teachers to enable them to teach with a greater understanding of safety, alignment and a deeper knowledge of yoga energy systems.



Alexi Pallpratt -
IYTA Yoga Teaching graduate 2008

"I completed the IYTA Yoga Teaching Diploma in 2008 and when life changed through motherhood, so did my yoga practice. I felt there was so much more to learn about my pregnant body and the connection to my beautiful baby. I knew I wanted to help other pregnant women feel safe in yoga and empowered, so I completed the IYTA Pre and Post Natal Graduate training in 2012-13. I loved the course as it was so informative and I've been enjoying teaching pregnant women ever since."



Ken Lidden -
IYTA Yoga Teaching Diploma graduate 2001

After graduating, Ken moved to Boston, Massachusetts, USA and set up the ABT Yoga Center. He now has between 1000 – 1,200 students attending classes at his studio each month. He says: 'I would highly recommend the IYTA Teacher Training program, it helped me begin to trust and believe in myself. Take the step - you may not know where you will land, but you will land!'



Anna Priebe - USA
undertaking the IYTA Diploma of Yoga Teaching -
via correspondence - 2015

'I'm now more than halfway through the course. I love the great breadth of philosophical, anatomical and spiritual teaching as well as the asana training. Meeting my fellow students at the five-day residential changed how I felt about my own studies, because the group was so diverse and everyone was doing the training for such different reasons.'

I believe this course comes back to what yoga really means. It's not about a brand or a quick fix. The course is giving me keys to open up new realms of experience.'

IYTA was established by Roma Blair in 1967. It is a non-profit organisation, providing the highest ethical values to quality, professional yoga teacher training.

The IYTA is:

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International Yoga
Teachers Association

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Michelle Merrifield

Our cover model and founder of studio Essence of Living talks about her life, yoga and learning to let go.

When did you begin practicing yoga?

I went to my first yoga class with my mother at the local surf club, when I was 16 years old. During my first savasana, I experienced an amazing feeling of connection and knew, from then, that I wanted to share that feeling of deep love and unity with others.

When did you become a yoga teacher?

My first yoga teacher training was with Yoga Arts in Ubud, Bali, 10 years ago. I had already opened Essence of Living and was qualified as a personal trainer and Pilates instructor. I initially had a limiting belief that I could not be a yoga teacher, because of my lack of flexibility. However, I knew deep in my heart that I wanted to share the feeling that yoga gives, not just the movements.

Who was your teacher?

I have travelled far and wide in pursuit of wisdom from great gurus who have dedicated their lives to the practice. I have completed yoga teacher trainings in India with Brahmami Yoga, New York with Jivamukti, Mexico with Paul Grilley, Byron Bay with Dena Kingsberg; each course giving me an even deeper understanding

and providing a different perspective on teachings. Now that I have been practicing yoga for half of my life, I look for different things from teachers than I used to, and am thirstier for practical philosophy and traditional teachings.

Who has been the most influential yoga teacher in your life?

The most influential teacher I have had is Alanna Kaivalya, as I did my apprenticeship in NYC under her loving direction and daily inspiration. I base a lot of my teaching on her wisdom, however, my students and the practice itself, have also taught me so much. Every day I learn something new, and let go a little bit more.

What did they teach you?

Alanna is a master at adjustments and she also helped me lay the foundations upon the biomechanical sequencing formula I created, and now teach to all of my teacher training students. Being naturally stiff, with a limited joint range, actually turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as I really understand the limitations that a lot of other people feel. I now know how to navigate around both the body and mind, in order to overcome those obstacles.

What is the most important life lesson you have learnt?

Nothing lasts forever, both good and bad, so enjoy the sweetness when life is fruitful and breathe deeply when life is challenging. Our internal and external worlds are constantly shifting, changing and rearranging, so I've learned to loosen



my grip and practice flexibility in every sense of the word.

What is your favourite yoga pose?

I don't have a favourite yoga pose, as they have all taught me so much about the light and dark sides of myself. Plus, every day I am different; I might feel amazing in a particular pose one day and tomorrow I will feel awful in exactly the same pose. I've practiced Ashtanga Vinyasa regularly for over 8 years, and the repetition of that practice has made me appreciate all the postures and how the postures themselves are neutral; it is me that brings the colour to the practice.

What's important to you?

I love being useful, having a purpose and knowing that I am making a difference in other peoples' lives. I am a creator by nature, so I always feel in flow when I'm designing and creating new projects.

Do you think yoga has changed in the past 10 years?

Yoga has definitely changed in the last ten

"The most influential teacher I have had is Alanna Kaivalya, as I did my apprenticeship in NYC under her loving direction and daily inspiration."

years, everything has. The essence and heart of the teachings are timeless and will always be relevant but like the laws of nature teach us, nothing is permanent. Everything is always in flux and therefore so is the way yoga is expressed and practiced. Yoga is a platform accessible for everyone to experience their true nature, what yogic practices we do to reach self realization is going to be unique depending on time, place and circumstance of each practitioner.

What is the future of yoga according to Michelle?

I am not sure what the future holds for yoga, but I know that if I continue to work on my own personal quest for integration, then I might be able to shine a little light in order to inspire others in their journey. For me, I am less concerned with what is

happening outside, and more interested in what is happening in my body, mind and spirit connection.

What is the Super Retreat that you will be teaching at, can you elaborate?

The Super Retreat integrates a collection of inspiring teachers from different yogic practices who have dedicated their lives to their spiritual pursuit. With a mixture of modern and traditional approaches, the Super Retreat is an ideal opportunity for anyone who wants to deepen their practice, both physically and spiritually. It is perfect for those who know that yoga is more than just an asana practice and are thirsty for the fruits of the practice. It will be an educational, motivational and inspiring four days that will create a shift in your perspective, opening the doors to new possibilities.

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Confidence Booster

Develop your child's confidence and self-esteem By Lorraine Rushton

Yoga provides some of the best tools for strengthening little bodies, minds and emotions: asana, breathing, visualisations and positive communication. Combine these together and you can equip your children with valuable tools to take into adult life.

One desirable attribute is self-confidence. Numerous studies have shown that self-confidence will help children at school, in relationships and later in life, in the workplace. If coupled with the quiet humility that yoga tends to manifest, your little one will be well-equipped for the road ahead. Here are three ways to practice with your children at home that will give them a foundation to build upon week after week, year after year.

The Superman Pose is a favourite because it builds back strength and helps spinal alignment, which results in children feeling powerful, strong and in control.

The visualisation and success list are designed to build mental and emotional resiliency and lead to them feeling happy about who they are.

I AM STRONG AND CONFIDENT POSE

Superman Pose. Tell your little one to lie down on their belly and take their arms and legs wide into a starfish. Perhaps tell them to imagine they are a very powerful superhero who is about to set out to make the world a better place. "You are about to set out on a journey using your special and unique gifts to make the world a better place. Think about three things that you do to make this world a better place. Maybe you give great hugs, look after friends, tell bullies to stop, give the best smiles." Ask

them to tell you three of their special qualities. Then tell them to get ready to take off. "Take a big breath in and as you breathe out, lift everything off the floor and FLY!" They lift up four to six times and each time hold long enough to spread their gift to the world and share with people who need it.

After the last time, tell them to lie down, turn their head to the side and rest, feeling their heart fill with joy and happiness, saying, "You are such a gift to the world and make it a brighter place."

I AM CONFIDENT VISUALISATION

Lay them on their backs, turn their palms up, let their feet flop out to the sides and ask them to pull their chin in slightly into their chests. Tell them to relax every part of the body and close their eyes. You are going to guide them to a happy place where they will picture all the things they are good at. "Keeping your eyes closed, imagine walking into a beautiful place. Choose somewhere that makes you feel really happy. Look around at all the colours, smell the beautiful fragrances; feel the sun shining down on your skin."

Ask them to imagine they find somewhere to sit down where they can relax and feel happy. "You look around and find a soft patch of grass to sit down on and lie back gazing at the sky, feeling relaxed, calm and peaceful."



Now ask them to focus their mind on a positive time." Remember a time when you did something great, or when you did your best, when you achieved something good or tried something for the first time and were brave. Remember how you felt, that feeling inside and you can picture your face so happy."

Remind them that they can remember this time whenever they are feeling afraid, insecure or unconfident; that they will always have this feeling; that it's captured inside them and can be drawn upon whenever they need it.

MY DAILY SUCCESS:

This is a great family ritual for school pick-up time, to do at the dinner table or to end the day with at bedtime. It sets a positive frame of mind and builds inner strength in children, by reminding them that they achieve things – big and small – every day. Do this every day for one week and see the impact.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



**Have questions for
the experts?**

Send them to editor@yogajournal.com.au

Answers to your questions about stress and vitamin B12.

What should I eat
before a stressful event?

Chocolate

A new study by Swiss researchers published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* found that men who ate a square of flavonoid-rich dark chocolate before having a mock job interview or taking a math test had less of an increase in the adrenal stress hormones cortisol and epinephrine than participants who ate a placebo. The study was co-funded by the Swiss Cocoa and Chocolate Foundation and the Swiss National Science Foundation.

I'm a vegetarian, and my doctor told me I should take a vitamin B12 supplement. How do I choose a brand I can trust?

To choose a brand you can trust, I suggest you firstly, look for a TGA-approved (Therapeutic Goods Administration) "listed" product, which will be evident by the inclusion of an "AUST L" number on the label. Also take into consideration, any research and testing performed by the company, quality of the particular supplement and its ingredients and the reputation of that particular brand. Most Companies perform third party and independent testing to ensure safety and quality control which will be listed on their website or you can call or send them an email to ask the questions of their testing process. When choosing a particular supplement, in your case Vitamin B12, take into consideration the different types of delivery (eg. Tablet, Liquid, Sublingual) for optimal absorption and the correct dosage. There are many wonderful "practitioner-only" brands, available with advice from your Naturopath that hold all of these standards and have research to back up the quality and efficacy.

Alita Barnes, Naturopath, Gold Coast, Qld

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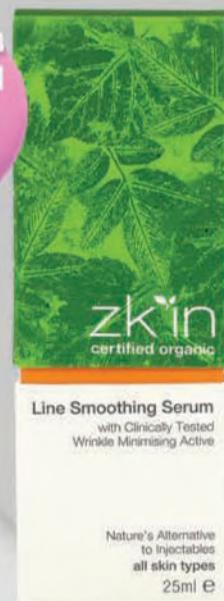
75% of volunteers achieved results the day following first application*.

Since using this beautiful smelling 'cool and refreshing' serum I've noticed the lines around my eyes are softening and my skin looks youthful. I love this product and recommend it to anyone – Fel

I notice an immediate tightening effect on the sensitive under eye skin and it keeps my skin well hydrated. A really wonderful product. – Amy

It smells delicious and feels light and not oily. I noticed a difference after just one use – Bridie

It absorbed quickly, and immediately my skin tightened and wrinkles smoothed. The best thing was that it didn't irritate my skin or eyes, unlike other products I have tried. It ticks all the boxes: non-irritant, Aussie made, organic, cruelty free, sustainable palm oil, vegan and actually works! - Kim



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EAT, SURF, YOGA, REPEAT!

For one stressed Syneysider, a trip to Bali to practise yoga and learn to surf proved a blissful journey of discovery. BY KAREN WARNER

FOR THE LAST 15 YEARS I'VE MADE TV PROGRAMS, ones you'd watch: *Getaway*, *Farmer Wants a Wife*, *Celebrity Apprentice*. I love it, but it can be highly stressful. A while back, I was more stressed than I can ever recall. I was wrapping up one show, starting another, doing radio interviews, trying to juggle two lives. I had to drive to a location shoot. As a producer, I drive around a lot. And I talk on my mobile a lot, too.

The nice, cute policeman was happy to tell me the two don't mix, as he wrote out my ticket. As he did, my real estate agent rang to tell me my tenants hadn't paid rent for months. The policemen interrupted and said that with the loss of points from the ticket, I'd lose my licence. For a year. He wasn't that nice anymore. Or cute. My blood began to boil. I needed my car. I needed my tenants to pay rent. I needed to get to this location. I needed a break.

Fast forward a few weeks and I'm sitting on a plane heading to Bali to the Surf Goddess Retreat, a female-only yoga cum surf school in Bali's up-market Seminyak district.

I regularly do hot yoga and am learning to surf too, so the mix seemed perfect.

Villa Serena is the unofficial name of the retreat, a collection of stunning buildings that have evolved in just nine years to provide a space for solo female travellers looking for a shared experience.

It was the brainchild of Australian Chelsea Ross, who created this seven-day surf and yoga program so women could come and learn to surf in a supportive environment. Chelsea moved from Australia to Bali 15 years ago at the age of 27 and was taught to surf by a female semi-pro on the island. She and a select group of girlfriends were among a small fraternity of female surfers back then when it was not socially acceptable for women to ride waves.

My home for the week was just a few doors up the laneway in the private villa which I was sharing with a fellow goddess, Jackie, a wonderful Aussie who worked in a senior management role in an international aid NGO. The open-air villa included two separate bedrooms, each with ensuites, a decadent Balinese day bed, sun loungers, 10-metre private pool, a

kitchen and luxurious soft furnishings.

That night we dined in the resort's main villa, which overlooks the main resort's pool. Here I got to meet the women with whom I'd be spending the next seven days. They ranged from high-powered corporate types looking for a quick escape to inspiring mothers, sisters and wives.

Each of my fellow Goddesses had an amazing story to tell – of illness, family crisis, stressful business ventures. All of them put my pathetic dramas at home to shame. I took a walk down the beach by myself and watched the sun drop below the horizon. I reminded myself to always keep perspective, no matter what. I felt better that evening than I had in a long time. What is this place doing to me, and it's only day one?

The mornings start with a 7am yoga session. The classes are taught by Susan, a beautiful, svelte blonde 42-year-old who had an accent that suggested she was well-travelled. She was the type of woman you wanted to know. I liked her instantly.

Today, like every day, she asked the class what sort of yoga they wanted. Susan prefers to teach and practise a traditional style and match the poses to her students. She draws on constant study to help evolve her teachings, "as our bodies are always adapting and changing, you can't just stick to one practice".

While she's a traditionalist, many that pass through the retreat doors have asked that all-important question: to name her style, which Susan has reluctantly named "rising heart". Susan believes that the heart is at the centre of the universe and, once the heart rises, it opens up and exudes compassion. She smiles softly, "I'm always saying 'Lift up your heart' in my classes, so it seemed to fit."

My fellow goddesses-in-training all seemed to have a common thread of high achievers hovering just on the other side of 40. This, according to Susan, is not by chance. "Guests seem to share a communal of kindred spirits. There is no such thing as coincidences in life; we often find synergy with the groups: some women come to get over break-ups, taking a break from the kids, wanting to change career."

Susan believes by the end of the eight days there seems to be a shift in most guests: "They choose their time to come here like a punctuation, a full stop to access something and then move forward. This is a great environment to process life."

After yoga we head down to the main villa for a gourmet breakfast of your



choosing, fresh fruit and eggs are on offer. Everything is made fresh on the premises and they pride themselves in using fresh, organic ingredients. After a hearty breakfast, it was time to hit the waves for my first surf lesson.

The idea of combining surf lessons with yoga came through an organic process.

One of Chelsea's friends who had learned to surf with her was also studying to be a yoga teacher. At that stage, there was no yoga being taught down by the coast, it was up in Ubud, known as an arts and cultural centre. She believes she coined the phrase "Surfing yoga retreat...never camp".

The morning practice leads us naturally to the surfboards, which Susan believes is a perfect fit. "Yoga builds body strength, flexibility, stamina and balance. It also helps develop a strong core and keeps your neck and shoulders open - all great for surfing," she says. She believes that at a fundamental level, surfing requires you to operate in the moment, as does yoga. "Yoga requests you to be present. Surfing offers the same discipline. Both are solitary things to do - in your yoga practice, it's all about being present on the mat, and on the surfboard, it is the same space - just you and the board, or you and the mat." Susan believes it's through "that space of being in the moment that leads to enormous tools of self discovery".

The surfing was a lot different in Bali, but under the guidance of qualified and very patient instructors, I advanced. I even opted to stay in longer and the feeling of getting up on a wave was so exhilarating.

It was already 2pm, the time had flown: we'd done yoga, gone for a surf, had a bite for lunch. Now, it was time to get ready for a three-hour massage at the Prana Spa.

After being gently guided to my treatment room, I soon found myself face-up, looking at a billowing fabric ceiling. I'm home, I thought.

My treatment of choice was a first for me - a hot-stone massage. Fifty-degree basalt stones were rubbed gently into my skin by two therapists with lashings of oil - the perfect antidote to a physical day of yoga and surfing. I was then treated to a facial and woke only a few times to an embarrassing snort from what was clearly me asleep and well snoring. The practitioner didn't miss a beat. She was clearly used to clients falling asleep during treatments. Talk about relaxed! As I made my exit, slightly dazed by my sudden bliss, I noticed my friend and Aussie export to

Bollywood, Tania Zaetta, pass me at reception. Our Yoga Goddess' Susan's wise words of there being no such thing as co-incidences ran through my mind. This place was freaky, in a good way.

Back at the villa, I saw a strange person in the mirror. She was a younger, happier and healthier me. I couldn't believe my reflection. Relax, I told myself. I reminded myself how important it is to relax and breathe.

Each day for the week to come commenced with our two-hour morning yoga session at 7am, followed by breakfast, then a surf. If it sounds structured, it wasn't. It was a healthy, invigorating routine we could break, but didn't. The yoga combined with the surfing was

addictive, meditative... we came to need it. I miss it now, writing this.

Chelsea says easily about the retreat's sole purpose, "It's a time to sit back, re-evaluate and take time out for themselves, which most women don't often give themselves permission to do."

She has seen some profound changes, and women taking control of their lives, which for her is the best reward. Chelsea smiles proudly, "This retreat is often the catalyst for change."

Back in Australia, the petty problems in my life sorted themselves out, as they always do. I felt different, changed, better, more connected with people. It wasn't just the post-holiday glow, but a profound change and I realised the most important

lesson I took from the retreat wasn't just the yoga and surfing. It's the sisterhood that surrounded it that made it a worthwhile life adventure. ☺

www.surfgoddessretreats.com. Prices start from \$2, 545 USD for seven days.



create SPACE

Minimalism has arrived, especially in home decor, and it has given rise to companies that actually come and declutter your house, for a fee. They are mainly in the USA, of course. Hands-on decluttering companies offer to help those of us stuck in the aspirational stages. "Clutter drains us, by reminding us of everything that needs to be done," says Cary Telander Fortin, co-owner of the declutter and design service New Minimalism in San Francisco. "When it's gone, you feel free."

Fortin's starter tips for paring down:

- Assess the organising helpers you already own. Are they just more "stuff" (e.g., is your footwear swimming around an inefficient shoe rack; is that multi-binder system for recipes too complicated for your dozen go-tos)? Make peace with the money you spent by donating these items to charities or schools.
- Base your "keeps" on what brings you real happiness and value. Ask yourself, "Am I using this?" or, "Do I truly love it?" If both answers are "no," it's clutter.
- Immediately decide what you're keeping, returning, donating, or recycling as unplanned items come into the house. Postponing action on unwanted gifts, iffy purchases, and bundles of hand-me-downs creates piles on the floor or countertops, whereas decluttering in real time keeps your space consistently clear. **NANCY RONES**



Kondoing is real

Marie Kondo has grown so famous for tidying she's become a verb. If you're tidying like her, you're kondoing. Besides her 2 million book sales, she attributes her fame to the method she uses to tidy which came to her with an epiphany, of sorts. While deciding what to throw away she was so overcome, she fainted. "When I came to, I heard a mysterious voice, like some god of tidying telling me to look at my things more closely. And I realised my mistake: I was only looking for things to throw out. What I should be doing is finding the things I want to keep. Identifying the things that make you happy: that is the work of tidying." Check out #konmari on Instagram.



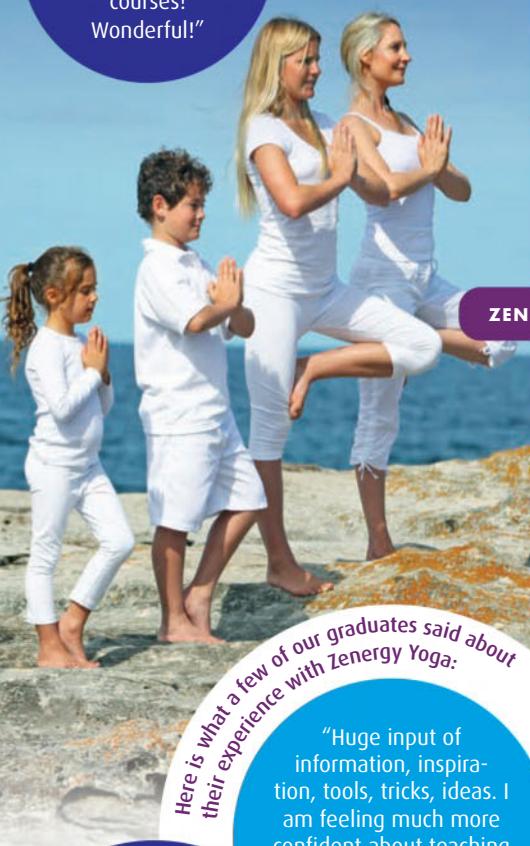
No Mess Kids

Children add joy, purpose, and meaning to our lives. They also add clutter. As parents, balancing life and managing clutter may appear impossible—or at the very least, never-ending. But what if there was a better way to live? *Clutterfree with Kids* (www.amazon.com) offers a new perspective and fresh approach to overcoming clutter. With helpful insights, the book serves as a valuable resource.

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mindful love

Five steps to dating like a yogi

By Jessica Humphries

I know it's rough out there. You want to be authentic and genuine, allowing a sense of mindfulness to infiltrate every aspect of your life, not just your yoga practice. You don't want to play games, but sometimes being too vulnerable means losing what you want.

With the rise of social media apps like Tinder, the world of dating has allowed us to make so many connections, but are we really connecting?

I've found myself becoming completely consumed by relationships in the past. But with mindfulness, we can begin to experience much more peaceful and fulfilling connections.

1 Make self-love your priority

"Authentic self-esteem comes not from improving your self-image but from knowing and accepting that core self within that is beautiful, wise, and loving," explains Deepak Chopra. From this place of genuine self-love that doesn't rely on external validation, you put yourself in the best position to love others and be loved. If you truly loved yourself, you wouldn't chase others, desperate for them to substantiate you. You would enjoy the delight of your own company. Get in the habit of continually asking yourself the question: What would I do if I loved myself?

2 Listen to your body

One of the major benefits of our yoga practice is body awareness. Through tuning into our bodies we begin to understand how emotional tension can manifest itself in our physical bodies. Liz Koch (coreawareness.com), is an expert on the psoas muscle (a long fusiform muscle located on the side of the lumbar region). Liz tells us that we hold a lot of emotional tension in this area, which is why it's not uncommon to experience strong emotions in certain yoga poses; "A primal messenger of the central nervous system the psoas is an emotional muscle expressing what is felt deep within – what is commonly referred to as 'gut feelings'". Remember the last time a relationship didn't go according to plan or ended badly and thinking 'I should have listened to my gut'? Start to trust the sensations in your body. These feelings may be giving you some very necessary insight into your subconscious, and hence the likelihood of success in the relationship.

4 Give yourself space

When you start seeing someone new, you begin to see yourself in different and sometimes challenging ways. During this period, give yourself extra time to nurture yourself and stay grounded, becoming aware of patterns and perhaps insecurities that arise. Sometimes the urge to connect with another can overtake the need to have time to you. You might think that spending every waking moment with your latest squeeze will make you happy, but we all need time alone to process our own emotions, especially when embarking on a new romantic endeavor.

3 Be present

One of the many benefits of the practice of mindfulness is the ability to create and maintain a sense of presence. Whether you're going through a rough breakup, or falling blissfully in love, know that everything is temporary. When you see negative thoughts and judgments emerging, allow them to be there and pass. When fantasies begin to arise and you become lost in it all remember: you have no idea what's going to happen. Don't question the relationship and your behaviour. Enjoy it in the now and allow it to unfold organically.

5 Learn to nurture your inner child

Mindfulness guru Thich Nhat Hanh reinforces: "To take good care of ourselves, we must take care of the wounded child inside of us...if you listen every day, healing will take place."

We all carry wounds from our childhood, and these can be triggered and re-emerge in romantic relationships. When you notice yourself experiencing strong emotions in reaction to a situation with your lover, see if you can sit with that feeling. Sometimes when we feel the urge to strongly react, we're experiencing trauma from our past – often this has little to do with the current situation. Take time to listen to and take care of your inner child before reacting.





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the life of Bryan

Bryan Kest's unconventional approach to yoga has helped bring yoga to the Western world and shape a generation of teachers

BY KAREN FARRELL

IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF BRYAN

KEST, you could be accused of living under a large stack of yoga bolsters. Kest is one of the West's most coveted international yoga teachers whose presence in the yoga spotlight spans three decades. Each year, he criss-crosses the globe visiting 100 cities to teach sell-out master classes, teacher trainings and workshops at studios heaving with yoga teachers and students, all ears for his knowledge. Having taught an estimated 18,400 yoga classes during his career, this master teacher has seen a staggering amount of bodies on the mat. Just don't call him a Guru.

Kest's throaty voice resonates down the phone from Santa Monica, Los Angeles, home to his successful Power Yoga studios. "You ask any question you want, and I'll answer it." It is this honest, self-assured manner; coupled with a frank, accessible and imitable discourse, which provides some of the most powerful attributes in Kest's teaching arsenal.

At age 15 and living in Hawaii, Kest found himself in the position of being in the first Ashtanga yoga class outside of India. Fellow Island resident, David Williams - the Western pioneer of Ashtanga yoga to America - became Kest's first yoga teacher, at the behest of his father. Kest Senior insisted that his children practice yoga or, as Kest recalls it, "get out of the house." Perhaps somewhat ironically, Kest's father - a former paratrooper - found in yoga

relief for a bad back; although it was what yoga did for his mind that he came to value most highly. Bryan also found himself with back injury due to a car accident and sought solace in a deepened meditation practice.

Kest isn't the archetypal yoga teacher. He never cues classes to start or end with 'Om' and considers stringent postural alignment akin to dogma. Discussion on alignment, which he prefers to refer to as "creating space", might prompt Kest to request a copy of the "Yoga Rule Book." As a student and former Teacher Trainee of Kest's, I can also attest that he's especially good at dropping the f-bomb during class; which grabs an easy headline wherever he travels.

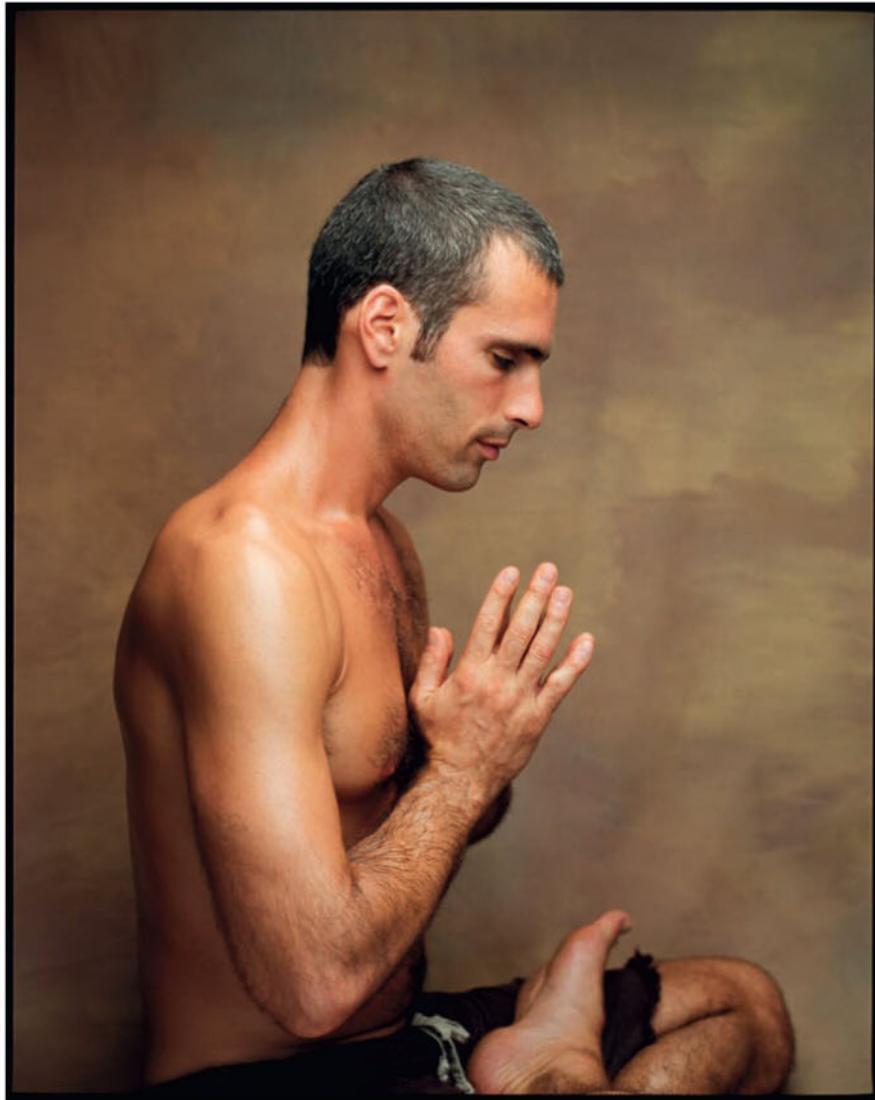
At the very outset, as Kest recalls it, he didn't have a jot of interest in creating another yoga 'system': "There is really no such thing as Power Yoga. Baptiste yoga, Jivamukti, Bikram and Ashtanga Yoga - these are all systems. Power Yoga is not a system.

You can take a 'Power' class anywhere in the world and it's going to be different because there is no system. When you take my class, I'm really trying to encourage the whole mental side of things."

During the 1990's and outfitted with shoulder-length black hair and oodles of swag, Kest cut a path as somewhat of a yogi rock star, keeping busy as Madonna and Steven Spielberg's wife's yoga instructor. He



PHOTO: NATE FUNK



“He’s especially good at dropping the f-bomb during class; which grabs an easy headline wherever he travels.”

popularised vigorous flow classes and coined the term “Power Yoga” – a name he’ll candidly tell us is redundant: “I used to think Power Yoga was a cool name as there’s nothing more empowering than doing a well-rounded yoga class but now I just think it’s a stupid name. It intimidates people as they sometimes think this style of yoga is too hard for them. I don’t want to alienate people. As soon as I find a better name, I’ll change it.”

In 1995, Kest released the sometimes-parodied Power Yoga with Bryan Kest videos featuring a young, darker-haired Seane Corn as a model yogini. It was from this era, which Kest rose to become the esteemed yoga authority he is today; stirring countless others along a yogic pathway. Kest hasn’t had a regular pay cheque since starting America’s first

donation-based yoga studio in the mid Nineties. His incentive for opening a pay-what-you-can studio model was inspired from his understanding that traditionally yoga was originally offered for no charge and to make yoga accessible to everyone.

This all-embracing approach continues at Kest’s studios today, where the homeless plus everyday people and famous celebrities might be found practicing alongside one another. One Christmas, on emptying out the studio donation box, Kest found an anonymous note accompanying a \$700 cheque – payment for three years of free yoga classes made good – testament to Kest’s mantra: “When you’re living your truth, somehow the universe takes care of you.”

Albeit, while Kest is renowned for teaching a complete physical yoga routine

which he says is “intended to leave the student completely tension free,” he is keen to emphasise that the physical asana is just the tip of the iceberg: “Yoga is just calisthenics from India if you don’t practice with a yogic mentality. The real objective is to bring the qualities of meditation into your asana practice.”

While Kest’s asana practice extends 33 years, what is not so widely known is that he’s also assiduously followed a Vipassana Meditation practice for 27 years – likely inspired from his time studying in India with S.N. Goenka – the Burmese-Indian teacher of Vipassana meditation. As part of a year-long sabbatical living in Mysore, India, Kest also studied with the main proponent of Ashtanga yoga, K. Pattabhi Jois. Kest credits this time with Pattabhi as a formative experience: “It was a great time because I was there with Pattabhi by myself, so I really got to know him and I got to pick his brain... What I learned from Pattabhi is mostly everything I never want to be as a yoga teacher and that’s been really important to me to move forward. I needed to have that experience with Pattabhi to push me to where I wanted to go.”

At 51, Kest packs seemingly indefatigable energy and still practices six times a week, although these days he sports much shorter hair. What doesn’t appear to have changed from his early teaching days is Kest’s unflagging tenet – “there is no enlightenment at the end of a yoga pose” – a notion he continues to reiterate to his students.

A large part of Kest’s maxim is to encourage students to leave rivalry, judgement, narcissism and reactivity at the studio door: “A lot of people bring a stressful state of mind into yoga and end up perpetuating that mind state in yoga as they’re too busy trying to touch their head to their toes or do Triangle Pose correctly... That’s why I say people bring their rubbish to yoga and they turn their yoga into rubbish.”

Through an incessant dialogue, which is often delivered in first-person – “if there’s anything I’m holding on to, I can just let go” – Kest strips back any preconceived ideas that perfection has a place in yoga. At the very core, he wants students to enjoy yoga as the ultimate personal practice and emphasises the need to be on high alert of feeding negative mental habits – namely, comparison and competitiveness.

“I think we can all agree that we’re not going to heal relationships and solve

problems with loose hamstrings. I encourage people to really figure out where they belong within the experience. We use basic, simple poses, which are approachable to everybody and encourage people to take those poses to their own degree... Basically, we can have a Grandma and Granddaughter, who are at different stages of their lives, using the same pose to find their own personal edge. It might look different but they both benefit equally."

For Kest, the "teacher" doesn't come as a Guru draped in orange robes and dreadlocks – rather, he considers life itself, with its myriad experiences, as the greatest teacher – even viewing injury as an opportunity for growth: "Injuries are your greatest teacher because you're forced to become more sensitive, gentle and humble. All the qualities you have when you work with injury are the qualities that the yogis have always been aspiring to develop... Practicing intelligently means practising gently.

Practising gently really is impossible unless you are aware so you could say practicing with awareness. It's a really strange concept to the Westerner; it's called 'moderation.'"

While direct references to Sanskrit are

"The only way to judge your progress in yoga is how little you judge your progress in yoga."

scant and sometimes the subject of satire in Kest's classes – such as likening Parsvottanasana to "bending over my (insert expletive) knee pose" – the Yamas and Niyamas – Ahimsa, Satya, Aparigraha – are littered throughout his teachings, which he makes a point of instructing in English: "It doesn't need to be said in a way that was spoken over 5000 years ago or in Gothic or Sanskrit. It can be spoken in plain English..."

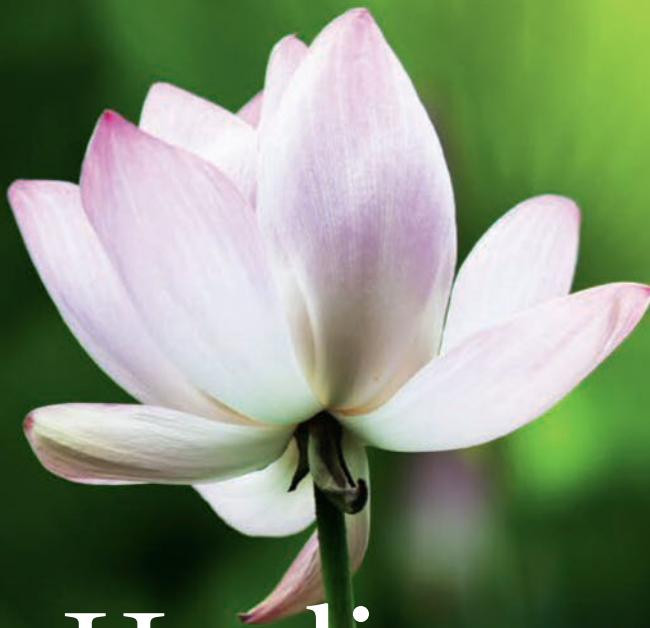
"All the great ones who have visited our Planet – Jesus, Moses, Buddha, Mother Teresa, Yogananda, Osho or Gandhi – were dedicated to the wellness, peace and uplifting of all beings by giving discourses on qualities of mind like love, compassion, gratitude and codes of conduct."

Yoga's ultimate goal, says Kest, is to eradicate judgment: "I have always felt the only way to judge your progress in yoga is how little you judge your progress in yoga, or maybe judge anything." ☺

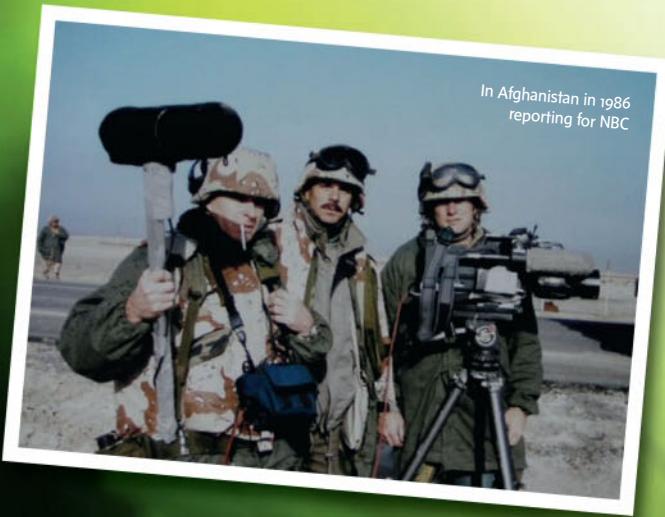
Bryan Kest returns for his fifth Australia visit from 24 - 31 August, 2015 to teach Power Yoga and LSD Master Classes, and will also facilitate his first Australian teacher training.

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Healing from the heart



In Afghanistan in 1986
reporting for NBC

A war correspondent reporting from the frontlines of the world's largest refugee crisis uncovers the power of yoga—and love. By Bhava Ram

1999. CORONADO, CALIFORNIA

My back is broken. Fifth vertebra snapped when I fell off a ledge while battening down windows during a tropical storm. Failed surgery. Declared permanently disabled. I can't sit up to eat a meal or walk without a cane, but it's not the pain that's killing me. I have stage-four throat cancer, likely from exposure to depleted uranium while I reported from the frontlines of the Gulf War for NBC News. It feels as if someone has planted IEDs—improvised explosive devices, which pocked the roads in Iraq—into the deepest recesses of my brain. They detonate in my mind every time I stress out: they burst when I scream at doctors for not fixing me; when I spit harsh words toward friends if they offer comfort or if I feel criticized. I approach panic when I think about how I'll be leaving my toddler son, Morgan, without a father.

Morgan sits atop my body braced to play while I lie flat on my back every day around the house. It was his second

birthday a few days ago. My oncologists have said that they don't believe I'll live to see his third.

Morgan gazes deeply into my eyes. He trembles, then whispers like he's making a wish he knows will never come true: "Get up, Daddy." The words crack something open inside me.

I feel a rush through my veins. It's unlike the acidic adrenalin and edgy cortisol that have been spinning me into anger, fear, and depression. It's a sweet nectar. For a moment, everything feels OK. In this instant, I consider that my love for this small child, and his for me, is my only chance for survival.

1986. THE HIMALAYAS, AFGHANISTAN

My cameraman and I are in thick forest and deep snow with mujahideen freedom fighters, who are battling the Soviets who have invaded their homeland. I'll air my reports on the NBC television station in Boston... if we get out of here alive.

A Soviet MiG fighter jet screams high overhead. We join the hundreds of mujahideen scrambling for cover. If we're seen, the pilots will radio the attack helicopters with the coordinates of our position. I have no idea how these warriors have managed to survive in this brutal terrain. The snow is hip deep. The slopes are nearly vertical. The freedom fighters live on rancid goat grease and naan as they stave off the Soviets.

It takes 12 days to capture this segment of the story. After my cameraman and I have the footage we need, we sneak out of the mountains on foot in the dead of night with our interpreter. We reach our Jeep hidden in the foothills, then slip through the tribal territories between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Here, too, capture by the Soviets is synonymous with death. It's sunrise when our wobbly vehicle coughs its way into Pakistan on a dust cloud impersonating a road. Our interpreter is at the wheel and suddenly slams on the

brakes. My cameraman grabs the video gear. The dust clears, revealing thousands of makeshift tents littering the tortured landscape of rocks and baked earth.

We encounter a flood of dazed people as we wade into the largest refugee crisis in world history: five million Afghans—nearly one third of the country's population—are displaced. This is among the largest camps, and disease is rampant among young and old. I witness missing arms and legs. I see shrapnel wounds in tiny faces. A mother's wailing lament for her child who has just died pierces my skin. I gently approach with my microphone as my cameraman films. We invite refugees to share their stories with the help of my translator. Soon, before we become overwhelmed by hundreds of people who want to share their heartbreaking circumstances, the three of us politely push on, forging our way toward the refugee hospital.

It's close to 40 degrees Celsius under the scorching sun, and even hotter inside the hospital. Sweat drips down my cheeks as I scan the scene. The floors are stained with blood. The war-wounded fill metal cots. Yet silence underlies the pervasive urgency. I kneel down beside one cot to interview a child, Mahmoud. He is wrapped in gauze. Most of his body is covered in third-degree burns from napalm. Yet, somehow, he seems at peace with the destruction of his village. The loss of his family. His searing pain.

We find the hospital head, who agrees to a quick interview. Dr. Shahwani, a Pakistani, reveals his amazement that so many of the Afghan patients manage to survive when it seems medically impossible. The Pakistani fighters, mostly mercenaries, don't fare as well. This, he says, is his "medical mystery."

2001. CORONADO, CALIFORNIA

It has been two years since Morgan pleaded, "Get up, Daddy." My only answer for my son then was to check into a hospital in order to detox off the painkillers, muscle relaxants, and antidepressants I'd been prescribed, get off alcohol, and die with some dignity. After endless days of writhing on the floor in withdrawal—uncontrollable vomiting, diarrhoea, hot flashes, cold flashes, tremors, and hallucinations—I came out the other side dazed and confused. I had no idea what to do next. The detox ward needed my room for the next patient. My wife was not ready for my return home. (It

was a marriage in deep trouble and that would eventually end.)

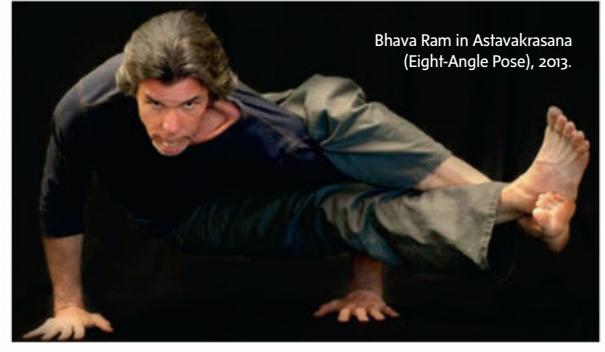
At that moment, one of the ward doctors walked into my room and invited me to join a small, experimental program at the hospital called The Pain Centre. He explained that the treatments combined ancient Eastern healing practices with modern Western holistic techniques. "We can't help you with cancer," he said. "But maybe we can mitigate the pain, and you can stay off medications and alcohol." I heard myself almost scream, "I'm in!"

A few days later, electrodes were being placed on my skull, my chest, my back, my arms. They were hooked up to computer monitors to track my brain waves, heart rate, skin temperature, breath flow. The technician helped me settle into a plush recliner, put headphones over my ears, and covered my eyes with a soft, padded cloth. Gentle music began. A deep, soothing male voice invited me to relax, and guided me through natural imagery. Waterfalls and rainbows. Twenty minutes later, I was relaxed beyond belief. Slowly bringing me upright, the technician told me all the baselines had improved, indicating less agitation, more inner harmony.

Six weeks into the program, my nurse at the centre announced it was time for yoga. I had never done yoga, and I couldn't imagine trying to practice with so much pain and with a broken back. Yoga was challenging. I couldn't even get my legs up the wall in a restorative posture without the yoga teacher lifting them for me. Deep breathing felt unnatural. Yet, after class ended, I was hungry for more.

I studied and practiced yoga until, abruptly, The Pain Clinic shut down. Insurance companies refused to support the treatments. At first, I despaired. Then I heard a whisper from my soul telling me to go home and build a yoga room.

I converted an office into a yoga space, where I practiced for hours every day. Yoga postures brought me flexibility, balance, and strength. I did twists to tone my organs. I studied the ancient texts, especially the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. I shifted my meat-and-potatoes diet to organic vegetarianism. Breathwork slowly purified and enhanced my energy. Affirmations



Bhava Ram in Astavakrasana (Eight-Angle Pose), 2013.

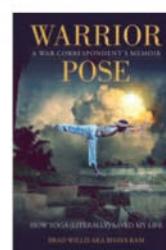
shifted my mental darkness toward the light. Meditation created calmness and inner awareness. Every time I wanted to quit, I chanted, "Get up, Daddy."

Two years later, my body was 37 kilograms lighter. I'd lost 1,000 kilos of emotional darkness. The back pain was all but gone. I couldn't believe how such a stiff and broken body could become so flexible. I hadn't died from cancer. I couldn't prove that yoga had healed me, but I was still alive.

2015. CORONADO, CALIFORNIA

In meditation this morning, I drift back to the Afghan refugee camps, the squalid refugee hospital, Mahmoud on his rusty bed. I can see the entire ward now. An Afghan side. A Pakistani side. At every bed of the wounded Afghans is a loved one, holding vigil, fingering prayer beads, whispering mantras in Pashto dialect. No one is with the Pakistanis. They are mercenaries. Detached from their families. Suddenly it dawns on me, the answer to Dr. Shahwani's medical mystery: it's the power of love.

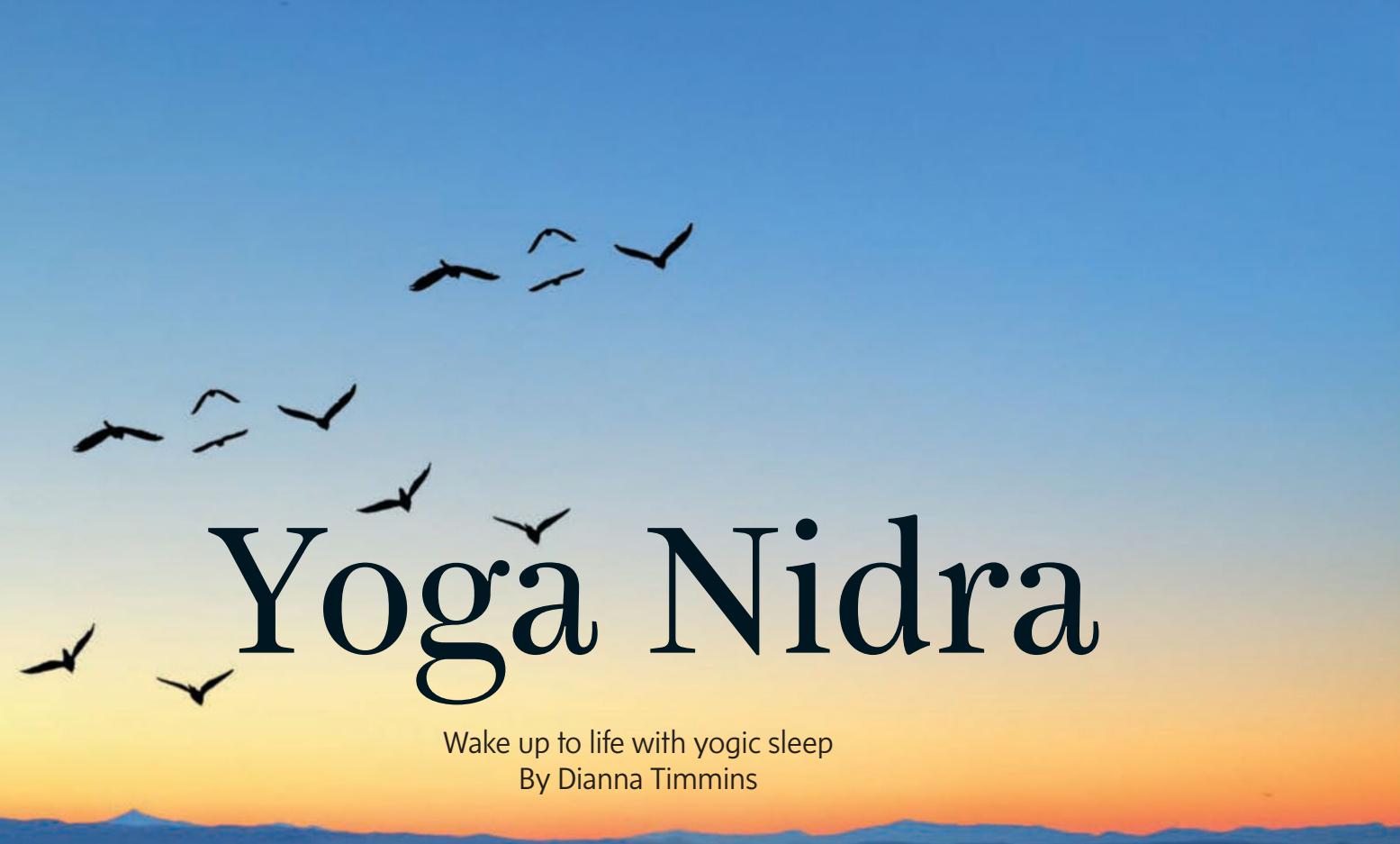
Love is the essence of our spirit, and the inner light to which yoga beckons us. Love transforms us—and those around us—in body, mind, and soul. My 2-year-old son touched me so deeply with his love that I found an inner power I did not know existed. Morgan is 17 now, and we remain incredibly close. I offer gratitude in my daily yoga practice that I am alive to be his father, to affirm and support him, and to give him my love every day. ☯



Bhava Ram is the author of *Warrior Pose: How Yoga (Literally) Saved My Life*. His foundation, Warriors for Healing, is dedicated to bringing yoga science to veterans facing PTSD.



DESPITE RECENT BUZZ SURROUNDING the inspiring 'slow movement', many of us continue living life in the fast lane; breathlessly motoring along full throttle, filling most waking moments doing rather than being ... but at what cost? Perhaps the root cause of common stress-related disorders is that we don't consistently stop to relax and really observe our mind-body relationship? When we sleepwalk through life blindfolded like this, connection with self becomes lost in transit; we seek happiness and healing externally, neglecting intuitive potential within. Systematic meditative techniques of Yoga Nidra – or 'yogic sleep' – could hold the key to awakening innate calmness often clouded by chaos; an ancient belief backed by growing scientific evidence.



Yoga Nidra

Wake up to life with yogic sleep
By Dianna Timmins





“The practice is like sending the body to sleep while the mind remains awake and alert.”

Yoga Nidra was practiced among eastern traditions for thousands of years before Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati ultimately revived it worldwide in the 20th century. Following studies with Swami Sivananda, he founded Bihar School of Yoga (India) in 1964 and began teaching relaxation techniques devised from the traditional Tantric practices of Nyasa. Numerous research-based adaptations now exist, including; Yogi Amrit Desai's Amrit Method, and iRest Yoga Nidra (now a registered trademark in the US) developed by American Clinical Psychologist, Dr Richard Miller. Different methods vary slightly, but each progressively enters deeper states of relaxation – not slumber, despite translation – for health and harmony.

“The word ‘nidra’ means ‘sleep’ in Sanskrit, but has double meaning,” says Byron Bay-based Clinical Psychologist and senior yoga teacher, Dr Lauren Tober. “Firstly, the practice is like sending the

body to sleep while the mind remains awake and alert. The second meaning references the idea that many of us walk around in an existence comparable to being asleep, and Yoga Nidra helps us to wake up to our true nature.”

Scientific stages of Yoga Nidra

As lying down in savasana (corpse pose) – or sitting upright if preferred – is traditionally maintained for the duration of Yoda Nidra, comfort is imperative and can be optimised by utilising blankets, bolsters and eye pillows. “A cushion or rolled blanket can be placed beneath your knees for support if there is discomfort in your lower back. If lying supine aggravates a cough, you may need to lie on your side. If you become physically uncomfortable, observe this and move slowly. Closing your eyes assists the mind to go inwards, but you can open them whenever you need,” guides renowned Satyananda Yoga expert, Swami Muktibodhananda.

Yoga Nidra's gentle step-by-step processes are often externally guided, but potentially self-applied over time. Practitioners internalise awareness by setting an intention or heartfelt desire; sequentially scanning and sensing body parts; tuning into natural breath rhythm; cultivating energy awareness; and witnessing arising emotions, thoughts and beliefs. Finally, resting in total awareness generates profound joy. Where appropriate, the Amrit Method includes added spiritual dimension by connecting to Higher Self, spirit guides and lineages.

According to senior Amrit Yoga teacher and founding director of Melbourne's Prana House, Julie Gargano, intentions are transformational tools based on the principle, ‘where attention goes, energy follows’. “Intentions are dropped in when body and mind are deeply relaxed and the unconscious mind is receptive, providing enormous organising power to masterfully undo programming and dissolve karmic

impressions. They should be worded in present tense, concise and precise, and seen as directions rather than destinations – with no attachment to end result,” she suggests.

Yoga Nidra’s structured techniques promote vast physiological benefits, including rebalancing logical left-brain and intuitive right-brain hemispheres. According to Swami Muktibodhananda, rotation of physical awareness generally commences from the right hand or foot, satisfying the practical, extroverted left-brain. This, she says, aligns the sequence with the brain’s cortical homunculus; that is, how the brain views the body from inside.

Recent studies published in the *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology* also linked consistent practice with improved blood pressure and heart rate variables, and controlled blood glucose levels and diabetes symptoms. As Dr Tober explains, Yoga Nidra also rebalances the nervous system.

“Constant arousal of the sympathetic nervous system (fight-or-flight) can result in physical and psychological imbalance.

“Recent studies published in the *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology* also linked consistent practice with improved blood pressure and heart rate variables, and controlled blood glucose levels and diabetes symptoms.”

Take an iRest Nap

It’s been said that 20 minutes of Yoga Nidra equates to approximately three hours of sleep! With this in mind, Dr Richard Miller offers an incredibly rejuvenating practice of an iRest Yoga Nidra Nap, which helps you fall into short periods of restful sleep (10-20 minutes) and awaken recharged. This practice promotes overall resiliency and claims to:

- Increase alertness and creativity
- Strengthen memory
- Enable decision-making
- Reduce stress and depression
- Improve perception, stamina and motor skills
- Enhance sex life
- Reduce risk of heart attack
- Overcome acute or chronic pain
- Help you lose weight and look younger

Download the free 10-minute Mp3 iRest Nap practice and a 20-minute Mp3 night time sleep practice to help you fall asleep (and stay asleep!) at www.irest.us/NourishRestfulSleep .

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Self-guided relaxation

Dr Lauren Tober shares some simple self-guided Yoga Nidra tips:

- Sit or lie down, making yourself as comfortable as possible.
- Close your eyes and set an intention for your practice; perhaps 'I am relaxed', or 'I welcome life just as it is'.
- Allow your senses to be open; noticing sounds, smells, taste, touch and sight.
- Slowly rotate your attention throughout your body, noticing arising sensations; begin in your mouth, through your face, scalp, neck, arms, hands, torso, legs and feet.
- Finally, sense your entire body at once.
- Move your focus to your breath, counting it backwards from seven to one; inhale and exhale for seven, inhale and exhale for six, and so on.
- Let go of counting the breath and simply relax here as long as you like: nothing to do, nowhere to go, simply being.
- Slowly open your eyes and return to your day refreshed!

Download a free guided meditation by Dr Tober at www.laurentober.com/ayj

of Yoga revealed significantly decreased depression and anxiety among patients with menstrual irregularities.

Senior iRest trainer and certified teacher at Gold Coast's Prema Yoga Studio, Fuyuko Toyota, endured chronic depression until her acclaimed teacher, Donna Farhi, threw her a lifeline by connecting her with Yoga Nidra in 2006. "Yoga Nidra recognises five sheaths (koshas) that cover our true nature: body, breath, emotion, cognition and joy. iRest specifically recognises a sixth, 'I-thought'.

We often misidentify ourselves with these sheaths; like a lightbulb covered by thin layers of tissue that dims the light. When I was depressed, I was enmeshed with sadness and belief that 'I am not good enough'. I was identifying myself with those emotions and beliefs as who I am," shares Toyota.

Mirroring Rumi's poem 'The Guest House', iRest Yoga Nidra not only encourages awareness of senses, emotions and thoughts – they welcome them as messengers without trying to alter them. "By welcoming, magic happens. It liberates us, as we see they are simply objects arising in our awareness. Through meditative enquiry, we recognise we are this unchanging awareness itself. This realisation frees us and returns us to our true home. Awakening to my true nature of

"Yoga Nidra lifts the fog so we can traverse our path with greater clarity, more slow than go..."

By bringing attention to body and breath, the nervous system naturally relaxes. Additionally, when we welcome sensation, breath, emotions and thoughts as they are, we experience profound peace. As such, Yoga Nidra calms the sympathetic nervous system and triggers the parasympathetic nervous system (rest-and-digest), rebalancing the two," she says.

Power of thoughts

The Black Dog Institute estimates one in five Australians aged 16–85 will be affected by some form of mental illness in any one year; most commonly anxiety and depression. Yoga Nidra's potential to reduce this statistic has recently gained scientific credibility, and hence widely integrated into clinical and corporate settings. A 2006 study at Walter Reed Army Medical Centre (USA) demonstrated how an iRest Yoga Nidra program may alleviate post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms – including anxiety – among soldiers returning from war. Additionally, a 2011 study published in the *International Journal*

pure awareness evaporated my depression," adds Toyota.

Fellow senior iRest trainer and Integrative Restoration Institute's (USA) director of operations, Stephanie Lopez, was freed from a former lifetime of anxiety when she discovered Yoga Nidra in 2002. "I was blown away by the practice. All sense of separation dissolved. It brought about a deep sense of calm, balance and peace, and has changed the nature of how I meet myself and life," declares Lopez, who regularly hosts workshops and teacher trainings in Australia with Toyota.

Peaceful sleep

If you have snoozed through Yoga Nidra before, don't despair; you wouldn't be alone, and Gargano assures work is still being done. "The idea of falling asleep is a subtle part of the practice where one phases in and out of sleep and 'yogic sleep state', also known as turiya (highest state of transcendental consciousness). If a student literally falls asleep throughout the practice, their unconscious mind is still receiving instructions and intentions and

therefore able to experience the many benefits," she says.

Contrastingly, drifting off isn't easy for the estimated 90 percent of Australians who experience sleep disorders at some point in their lives; commonly caused by stress and chronic pain. At night, minds can become preoccupied by 'what-ifs', 'should-haves' and must-dos', or relentless physical aches.

The required eight hours of shut-eye becomes sabotaged, and well-being suffers. In *Yoga: the Path to Holistic Health* (Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2001), B.K.S. Iyengar says simply lying in savasana 'helps toward refreshing, dreamless sleep, especially for those with sleep disorders'. The practice of Yoga Nidra in this position offers even greater potential for peaceful sleep by directly addressing obstacles.

"If we simply meet pain as a concept, we move into our habitual patterns and reactions to pain. However, in iRest Yoga Nidra, we inquire into the actual direct, felt-sense experience of intense sensations as it arises in the body. When we meet sensation as it is, many find that it opens its

inherent vibration. The sensation may become less intense and may even dissolve for periods of time," explains Lopez.

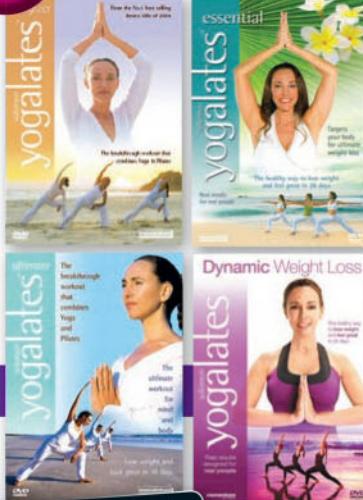
The pattern of Yoga Nidra's nurturing cycle is clear; sleep better, feel better – and vice-versa. This relationship is pivotal in the eventual goal of applying Yoga Nidra's principles beyond savasana and the four corners of our bed. Even if just for fleeting moments, pure awareness of yogic sleep can be integrated into waking hours; perhaps simply noticing how breathing alters in response to situations, or observing vibrant hues of a rainbow that fills a cloudy sky with promise. Yoga Nidra lifts the fog so we can traverse our path with greater clarity, more slow than go; this fosters deeper connection not only with our Self, but the world around us.

"I feel a deep interconnectedness with life through living this practice. I believe I am a better friend, spouse and human being because of it," inspires Lopez. ☺

Prana House are hosting Yoga Nidra teacher training in Melbourne, November 2015; visit www.pranahouse.com.au for details.



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self Preservation

Preserve your farmers' market haul now and enjoy a variety of local produce all winter long. By Jennifer Iserloh

The idea of eating local appeals on several levels. The food is fresher and often more nutrient dense than stuff that's been in transit for days. Less travel time also lightens our carbon footprint. And buying local supports our neighbour farmers and local economy. But it can get a tad dicey in some regions during winter months, when there aren't fresh crops of colourful produce, and when farm stands are either overrun by root vegetables or they disappear altogether. To keep the local love going through to spring, make a plan now to preserve surplus. By matching foods with the best preservation methods, you'll enjoy more colour, texture, flavour, and even nutrients all winter long. Here are four methods to try, plus four recipes for enjoying your stored bounty.

Dehydration

This method turns fruits and veggies into tempting, crispy snack foods without sacrificing nutrition, according to Dr. Drew Ramsey, a farmer and assistant professor of psychiatry at who specialises in brain nutrition. Removing water doesn't damage the disease-fighting antioxidants you find in the pigments of plants, he explains. You can dehydrate any food that can be thinly sliced—which speeds drying time—and it's a great alternative for foods like zucchini and other summer squash whose texture falls apart when canned. You'll need a good dryer; we like the Sunbeam (see box piece on page 49). First, preserve flavour, colour, and nutrition by blanching veggies: Boil for 1 minute and then plunge them into a bowl of ice water. You may also blanch fruits such as apples, peaches, pears, and apricots.

Thinly slice high-moisture produce like tomatoes for faster drying; a Benriner Japanese Mandoline works well (see page 55.) To add extra flavour to vegetables, toss them with a wet marinade consisting of 1 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp chopped rosemary or thyme, and 1/4 tsp salt. Then, to dry the marinated veggies, line the bottom of your dehydrator with unbleached parchment paper to catch drips. Follow instructions on your dryer for drying times and temperatures. Store dehydrated produce in glass jars in the pantry, then add to soups, salads, and stir-fries, or enjoy solo as a snack (think tomato chips and Brussels sprout crisps).

Root-Cellar Storing

Root cellaring—a practice from a bygone era—is making a comeback as an easy way to save earthy root veggies such as carrots, parsnips, shallots, horseradishes, and even artichokes. Fruits that sweeten slowly in a cool space are good candidates, too; try apples, pears, and quince. Keep the temperature at around 7 degrees Celsius or cooler, but not cold enough to freeze; a cool crawlspace or mini-refrigerator works as well. Layer the bottom of wooden vegetable crates or waxed, corrugated vegetable boxes (sometimes available from the farmers' market) with newspaper or brown paper bags to help regulate humidity, which can cause spoilage. Pack in the produce, storing fruits away from veggies, since fruits emit fumes that cause vegetables to quickly over-ripen. Root vegetables like potatoes, and turnips store up to six months, and fruits like pears and apples up to three months. Produce that's wrinkled, shrivelled, or has dark





Chunky Minestrone with Rosemary

SERVES 8 (MAKES 3 LITRES)

Fragrant rosemary adds pungent flavour, but if it wasn't included in your harvest, use lavender, more sage, or dried thyme instead.

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small red or yellow onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 sage leaves, chopped
- 1 container (900ml) low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 can (800 ml) diced tomatoes
- 1 can (400 ml) low-sodium kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (400 ml) low-sodium chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 250 grams green beans, fresh or frozen, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 250 grams frozen green veggies
- ½ cup grated fresh Parmesan

In a large, heavy stockpot over medium heat, heat oil. Cook onion, carrots, celery, garlic, and sage, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to soften, 3 to 4 minutes. Add broth, tomatoes, kidney beans, chickpeas, green beans, rosemary, and salt and pepper to taste. Reduce heat and simmer until kidney beans are warmed through and green beans begin to soften, 10 minutes. Add green veggies; cover and cook until warmed through, 1 minute. Serve topped with Parmesan.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 174 calories per serving, 5 g fat (1 g saturated), 24 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 8 g protein, 568 mg sodium



Winter Greens Salad with Carrot-Ginger Dressing

SERVES 4

Drizzle leftover dressing on your favourite cooked protein.

- 2 medium carrots, peeled and grated (about 1 cup packed)
- 3 tbsps sesame oil
- 2 tbsps peeled ginger, chopped
- 2 tbsps rice vinegar or apple-cider vinegar
- 2 tbsps fresh lemon juice (about 1/2 lemon)
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tbsps low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tbsps honey
- 8 cups winter greens, such as mixed greens, baby kale, or beet greens

In a blender, process carrots, oil, ginger, vinegar, lemon juice, garlic, soy sauce, and honey until smooth. Thin dressing with 1/4 to 1/2 cup water, if desired. Toss the dressing in a bowl with greens and serve immediately. You may also refrigerate dressing in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 194 calories per serving, 11 g fat (1 g saturated), 20 g carbs, 3 g fiber, 5 g protein, 229 mg sodium

All recipes developed by Jennifer Iserloh.

The fastest and easiest of all the preserving techniques, freezing keeps nutrients intact—both water-soluble vitamins such as Cs and Bs and delicate minerals.

spots has been stored too long. Ramsey suggests wrapping end-of-season green tomatoes and other fruits individually in sheets of newspaper; they will ripen slowly and be ready later in the year.

Freezing

The fastest and easiest of all the preserving techniques, freezing keeps nutrients intact—both water-soluble vitamins such as Cs and Bs, and delicate minerals. It works well for autumn-time leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, and herbs, including kale, spinach, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, collards, rosemary, lavender, bay leaves, and thyme. Blanch veggies before freezing, says Ramsey. For long-term freezing of six months or longer, use an inexpensive vacuum-seal system (see over page) instead of standard zipper-lock bags to compact for efficient storage and protect against freezer burn, in which air penetrates the package and damages food. Freezer-safe glass containers also protect against burn and are an eco-friendly option. For short-term freezing (two to four weeks), try making smoothie packs: measure individual portions of berries and greens into waxed paper bags. Tuck your stack of waxed bags into one large, airtight zipper-lock bag to keep them organized for fast morning meals.

Canning

This old-time favourite is the perfect method for moistly storing fruits, and some veggies, to retain succulence, says Ramsey. Choose deeply hued purple plums, luscious grapes, and fragrant figs, along with tart granny smith apples ranging from pink to pale green, and slightly ripened pears. When it comes to veggies, try firmer ones that won't fall apart, like green beans, cucumbers, and okra, although softer produce can taste great after canning, too. Wait to cut veggies and fruits until you've prepped your canning area—this preserves vitamin C, which can be lost to prolonged exposure to air or water, says Ramsey. Select wide-mouth, pint-sized jars approved for canning that are easy to fill and the ideal height for fruit slices, such as Ball brand Mason-style jars with sealed lids and rings (kitchenwaredirect.com.au). Avoid jars with "clamp style"



Cashew Vegetable stir-fry with Dried Veggie Crisps

SERVES 4

Savoury miso paste with lemon creates a thick sauce that's ideal both for drying veggies and dressing up a stir-fry.

- 3 tbsp white miso paste
- Zest and juice of one lemon
- 2 tsp honey
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 small head radicchio or $\frac{1}{2}$ head red cabbage, thinly sliced
- 2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped cashews
- 4 cups cooked brown rice, barley, or quinoa
- 1 jalapeño, sliced (optional)
- 2 cups dehydrated Brussels sprout crisps,* kale chips, or seaweed chips

In a bowl, whisk together miso paste, zest and juice, honey, garlic, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water.

radicchio, and celery, and cook, stirring often, until the vegetables soften, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in miso mixture, and sprinkle with cashews.

Divide vegetable stir-fry and rice, barley, or quinoa among 4 plates and top with jalapeño, if desired. Garnish each plate with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dehydrated Brussels sprouts, kale, or seaweed. Serve immediately.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 420 calories per serving, 13 g fat (2 g saturated), 66 g carbs, 9 g fiber, 10 g protein, 523 mg sodium

*To make Brussels sprout crisps, clean, quarter, and coat raw sprouts with a mix of 3 tbsp white miso paste and juice of one lemon. Place onto a dehydrator tray so they do not touch, and dry at 135°F until crunchy and firm, about 4 hours.

Honeyed Canned Pears with Chocolate Drizzle

SERVES 4

Sweet pears give contrast to earthy bay leaf and pungent allspice. For drizzling, choose a high-quality, artisanal dark-chocolate sauce made with 100 percent real cocoa.

- 4 dried bay leaves
- 1 tbsp whole allspice or
- 2 tsp ground allspice
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 8 canned pear halves
- 4 tbsp dark-chocolate sauce

In a small saucepan over high heat, bring to a boil 1.5 cups water, bay leaves, allspice, and cinnamon stick, stirring for 1 minute. Add pears, cover, and turn off heat. Cool for 1 hour.

Divide pear halves among 4 bowls; top each bowl with 1 tbsp chocolate sauce. Serve immediately.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 149 calories per serving, 0 g fat, 37 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 1 g protein, 5 mg sodium



Choose deeply hued purple plums, luscious grapes, and fragrant figs, along with tart granny smith apples ranging from pink to pale green, and slightly ripened pears.

lids, since they can easily be compromised by bacteria and are not safe for canning. Sanitize jars and other cooking items by submerging them in boiling water for one minute. Once you're done filling and closing up jars, test your seals. If the centre of your lid springs back when pressed, your seal is broken and the jar's contents should be refrigerated and used promptly. If the lid centre remains firm when pressed, your seal is good and the contents can be kept in a cool, dry place for up to a year. ☺

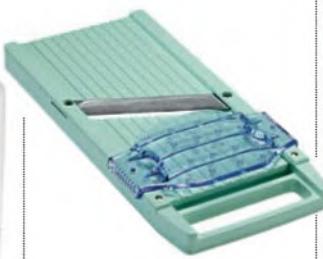
Jennifer Iserloh, co-author of *Fifty Shades of Kale*, is a chef, yoga teacher, and creator of the Skinny Chef Superfood Sauces. Find more of her recipes on skinnychef.com.

Tools of the Trade



The Sunbeam Food Dehydrator

The Sunbeam food dehydrator will dry a variety of foods for delicious, healthy snacks, ranging from fruits and vegetables to herbs and meats, all without added preservatives. It's available from Harvey Norman, Good Guys and Myer for around \$119.



Benriner Japanese Mandolin Food Slicer

This handy little tool is the Rolls Royce of food slicers. Capable of 115mm width and slicing from .3mm to 5mm thick, this slicer is available from kitchen speciality shops for around \$60. Well worth the investment.



Sunbeam FoodSaver Vacuum

Keep food fresh up to five times longer and reduce food wastage with this home vacuum system. It's easy to operate and clean and is relatively inexpensive for this type of equipment. Available at Harvey Norman, Big W and Good Guys for around \$129.

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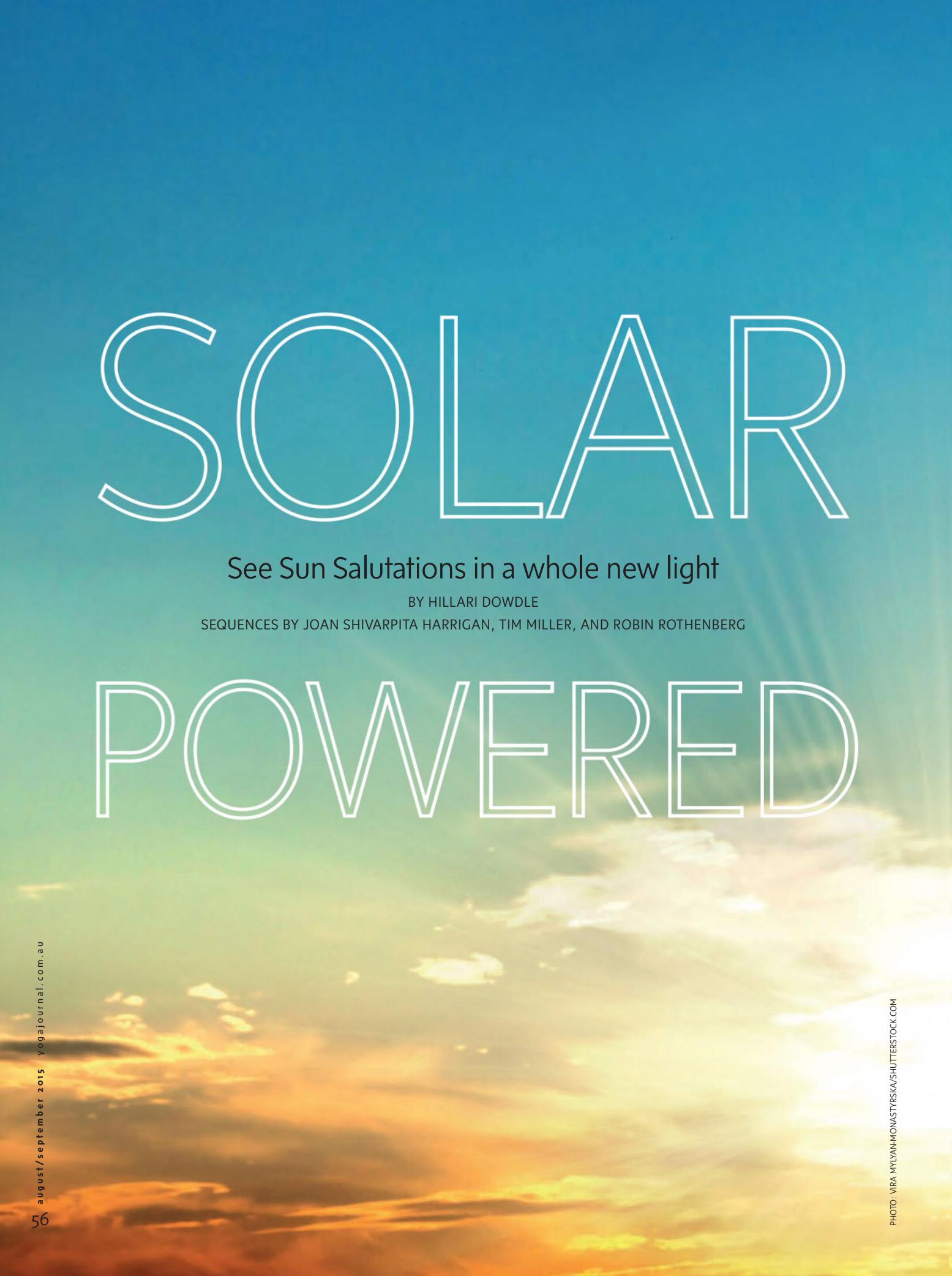
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flower-of-life

- > ancient symbol known worldwide for its energetic power



SOLAR



See Sun Salutations in a whole new light

BY HILLARI DOWDLE

SEQUENCES BY JOAN SHIVARPITA HARRIGAN, TIM MILLER, AND ROBIN ROTHENBERG

POWERED



IT'S SO EASY TO GET LOST in the flow of Sun Salutations: Mountain Pose, Upward Salute, Standing Forward Bend, Half Standing Forward Bend, Chaturanga, Up Dog, Down Dog, Half Standing Forward Bend, Standing Forward Bend, Upward Salute, Mountain Pose, etc., etc., ad infinitum. So many yoga classes include them, we've come to think of them as standard warm-up fare, akin to a brisk walk pre-run. But that's far from their traditional goal.

Sun Salutations, known as *Surya Namaskar* in Sanskrit, originated as a prayerful way to give thanks for the sun, as well as a spiritual light within us. "You are saluting the outside sun for providing life to the planet, and your internal sun for providing consciousness," says yoga teacher Richard Rosen, author of *Original Yoga: Rediscovering Traditional Practices of Hatha Yoga*. While no one knows exactly when Sun Salutations first started or what they first looked like, many yogis assert that they date back thousands of years to when

ancient Indians would chant mantras while bowing and then standing with arms raised in a ritual prostration. Modern scholars point to mid-19th-century commentary on the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, the manual for hatha yoga, as the first reference to a Sun Salutation practice, but they say written instructions did not appear in any books until the early 20th century—a time when the rajah of Aundh (a former state in India) sought to strengthen society physically and spiritually via a series of asanas. Today, Sun Salutations are ubiquitous in Western yoga classes thanks in part to K. Pattabhi Jois, founder of Ashtanga Yoga. His Sun Salutation A (described earlier) and Sun Salutation B (adds in Chair Pose and Warrior I) serve as a foundation for Ashtanga and most vinyasa practice in the West. From that foundation, Sun Salutations are still evolving, especially as teachers are more willing to innovate and experiment with the form—adding, subtracting, or rearranging poses as they see fit. "Asana is this beautiful physical opportunity to move

our bodies in all kinds of different ways, and adapt and learn and grow," says Viniyoga teacher Robin Rothenberg. "It's always good to freshen up your practice so you don't go into cruise control." If you need inspiration to try something new, now might be the time to try it. We turned to Rothenberg and two other yoga teachers who offer unique approaches to standard sequences for ways to think about Sun Salutations in a whole new light. The result: the three inspiring sequences on the following pages from the Kundalini, Ashtanga, and Viniyoga traditions. You may love these creative versions and keep them with you for a lifetime. Or you may find they help you become more aware of what you're already doing, so that when you return to the good old Mountain Pose, Upward Salute, Standing Forward Bend, Half Standing Forward Bend, Chaturanga, and so on, you're able to do it with a new perspective—knowing that while it's just one of many options, it's the one that resonates with you the most.

THREE WAYS TO SALUTE THE SUN

STYLE: Kundalini

INTENTION: Practice a full-body prayer

A PRIMARY GOAL OF Kundalini Yoga is a spiritual awakening, so Joan Shivarpiita Harrigan, a *brahmacharini* (Vedic nun) and director of Patanjali Kundalini Yoga Care isn't at all concerned with the purely physical aspects of Sun Salutations, such as opening the hamstrings or building a tight core. She teaches a Kundalini Sun Salutation that is tied to reverence, prayer, and *pranams*, Sanskrit for "bowing in reverence." As such, the form likely looks more like the Sun Salutation the *rishis* of old might have practiced than what we see in most studios today.

"It is revering the divine in the form of the sun, which is an ancient practice to invigorate not just the physical body but the subtle energetic body," Harrigan explains. While teaching Sun Salutations, she speaks liberally of concepts like the chakras (the energetic wheels that represent our potential for physical manifestation, sensuality, power, love, communication, intuition, and spiritual connection) and the *koshas* (the five "sheaths" that represent our existence on the planes of the physical body, the energy body, the mental body, the wisdom body, and the bliss body). "We are incarnate, of the earth, and yet we are spiritual beings, capable of transcendent experience," she says.

To Harrigan, a Sun Salutation is nothing more or less than a full-body prayer: "It is a beautiful practice, especially when used to help start the day. It vitalizes the *prana* system and gets the juices flowing while acknowledging the spiritual purpose of the day ahead."

OUR PROS Teacher Joan Shivarpiita Harrigan is director of Patanjali Kundalini Yoga Care USA in Knoxville, Tennessee. Model Melisa Jai Gobind Kaur is a Kundalini, vinyasa, and Yin Yoga teacher and massage therapist in the Denver area.



STYLE: Ashtanga

INTENTION: Turn up the heat

ASHTANGA, A PHYSICALLY demanding practice that involves synchronising the breath with near-constant movement in a prescribed series of postures, is already rich with Sun Salutations in the form of two sequences: Sun Salutation A (the well-known sequence outlined on the previous page) and Sun Salutation B, which weaves in Chair Pose and Warrior I (see part of the sequence on following pages). "Surya Namaskar both focuses the mind and warms up the body to do subsequent asanas," explains Tim Miller, director of the Ashtanga Yoga Center in Carlsbad, California. "It also builds strength and helps detoxify the body. It's probably the most effective use of our practice time."

That said, Miller does recognize that Sun Salutations A and B can start to feel a little automatic and mechanical when you practice them day after day, week after week. "If we find ourselves on autopilot, it's an indication that we're no longer focused on the task at hand," he says. And so, after taking a class with celebrated Iyengar teacher Roger Cole in 1988, Miller was inspired to play with the form—and to invent his own take on the Sun Salutation, expanding on Cole's ideas of linking static standing poses in the heart of an Iyengar practice. "I took my Ashtanga background and Sun Salutations, and made Cole's standing poses more fluid using Ashtanga elements," Miller remembers. "I call it Sun Salutation C; it's like an improvisational jazz riff, using the basic structure of Sun Salutation B and then expanding it in interesting ways."

Miller practices Sun Salutation C within Sun Salutation B once a week to keep things fresh, and also practices it on its own from time to time—it's a complete practice unto itself. "Sun Salutation C is now widely used in many vinyasa flow classes, and I take full credit and blame for that," he says. Sun Salutation C has lots of challenging twists, so try it if you're looking to move a bit beyond your comfort zone.

OUR PROS Teacher Tim Miller has been studying and teaching Ashtanga Yoga for more than 30 years. He was certified by K. Pattabhi Jois in Mysore, India. Model Ty Landrum is an Ashtanga teacher and director of the Yoga Workshop in Boulder, Colorado.



STYLE: Vinyoga

INTENTION: Restore your body

AS A CERTIFIED YOGA therapist, Robin Rothenberg, director of Essential Yoga Therapy in Fall City, Washington, sees plenty of broken-down yogis, ranging from beginners to experienced teachers. And guess what many of them are broken down by? Sun Salutations. “Sun Salutations are like French fries—salty, crunchy, sweet, and you can get them really fast,” she says. “But just like when you eat too many fries, any repetitive movement done unconsciously can lead to serious problems.”

One of the most common injuries she sees among yogis is damage to the rotator cuff, which supports the shoulder girdle, a complex assembly of four shoulder joints. “Most people have pretty weak upper bodies since we are no longer doing much in terms of manual labor with our arms,” Rothenberg says. “Then we go into a yoga class, and right off the bat we’re asked to repetitively support our body weight on our wrists, elbows, and shoulders in Sun Salutations. The joints can literally wear out.” She advises students to pay attention to any sense of strain or fatigue, both signs to stop pushing and try alternate poses. “If you can barely do five Sun Salutations, start there,” she says. “The classic teaching of yoga is not about the achievement of 108 Sun Salutations and putting on a show; it’s about being honest, real, and authentic.”

Rothenberg has developed a floor-based Vinyoga Sun Salutation that takes weight-bearing out of the picture and pressure off joints. “It’s a way of stepping back a bit and seeing how it feels,” she says. “Many yoga teachers are convinced that standard Sun Salutations feel the best for everyone, but there are ways to practice that are less risky and can feel so much better, especially for beginners and women in middle age, who due to hormonal changes, have less stability in their joints.” Even if you want to move into your regular sequence, Rothenberg’s practice can serve as warm-up to prep your shoulders for safer transitions between Chaturanga, Up Dog, and Down Dog. She starts by sweeping the arms wide in Vajrasana, which can be particularly helpful if you’re sitting at a desk all day



with your shoulders hunched and locked.

Though the promise of Vinyoga is to help the individual where he or she is, this gentle routine works for many.

OUR PROS Teacher Robin Rothenberg is an internationally respected yoga therapist with a full-time practice serving people living with chronic pain and illness. Model River Cummings has more than 20 years experience as a teacher and practitioner of Vinyoga, yoga therapy, and Vedic chant. She lives in Boulder, Colorado, and offers retreats worldwide.

TURN THE PAGE TO TRY THESE SEQUENCES »

KUNDALINI



Tadasana
(Mountain Pose), variation
Begin standing tall and grounded, taking in the power of the earth and focusing on that with your palms together at your heart.

Urdhva Hastasana
(Upward Salute)
Open your palms, keeping thumbs together, and reach up and back. Bring your arms next to ears, bow back, and look up, receiving the grace of the divine through your heart chakra.

Uttanasana
(Standing Forward Bend)
Bow forward, bending your knees if necessary, and place your hands beside your feet.

Anjaneyasana
(Low Lunge), variation
Step back into a Low Lunge, dropping your back knee to the floor. Arch your back and look up.

Astanga Pranam
(Knees-Chest-Chin Pose)
Step back with your front leg and bring your chest down. You're prostrating yourself to the earth in full pranams, conveying the oneness of our earth body with our living planet.

Makarasana
(Crocodile Pose)
Lie flat on the mat, place your forehead on the floor, extend your legs, and point your toes.

TO BEGIN Start with these seven poses from Sun Salutation B, then go to C.



ASHTANGA



Virabhadrasana I
(Warrior Pose I)
Step forward with your right leg and gradually bend your right knee. Lift from the tailbone toward the navel and move your arms and torso into a vertical position. Turn the back foot slightly in, while squaring the hips and torso. Hold for 5–10 breaths.

Virabhadrasana II
(Warrior Pose II)
Open your arms and hips, lifting your pelvic floor and lower abdomen to facilitate the widening of the front of the pelvis and external rotation of the hips and thighs. Extend strongly through your arms and hands. Hold for 5–10 breaths.

Utthita Parsvakonasana
(Extended Side Angle Pose)
Lightly bring the right hand to the floor alongside the little-toe edge of the right foot and extend your left arm over your left ear. Draw your right knee against your right arm. Press down into the outer edge of the left foot. Hold for 5–10 breaths.

Utthita Trikonasana
(Extended Triangle Pose)
Straighten your right leg and bring your left arm to a vertical position. Lift your kneecaps by engaging your quadriceps, and either grab the big toe of the right foot with the right hand or place your hand on the ankle or shin. Hold for 5–10 breaths.

Ardha Chandrasana
(Half Moon Pose)
Bend your right leg and place your right hand about a foot in front of the right foot, leaning forward to straighten the right leg. Bring the left leg up so it's parallel to the floor. Flex the foot; extend the left arm up. Hold for 5–10 breaths.

Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana
(Revolved Half Moon Pose)
Place your left hand on the floor next to your right one and lift your right arm straight up by twisting the torso. Point the left foot and extend the left leg. Hold for 5–10 breaths. Bend your left knee and lower the foot.

VINYOGA



Vajrasana
(Thunderbolt Pose), variation
Start by kneeling, arms at your sides.

Thunderbolt Pose, variation
Sweep your arms wide on an inhale and bring them together in front of your heart in Anjali Mudra. On an exhale, bow your head slightly.

Urdhva Hastasana
(Upward Salute), variation
On an inhale, lift the arms forward and up, creating a slight extension of your spine.

Balasana
(Child's Pose)
On an exhale, fold the hips back toward the heels as is comfortable, bringing the arms and forehead to the floor in a relaxed position, elbows bent.

Bhujangasana
(Cobra Pose)
Slide forward into a gentle Cobra Pose. Roll your shoulders back and down. Hug your belly in to support your lower back as you inhale and lift your heart to the sky.

Child's Pose
On an exhale, draw up through the belly, allowing the lower back to flex or round gently and fold back. Release hips to heels; relax arms and forehead on the floor.

A woman in a white tank top and light blue leggings is in Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose), with her head and upper back lifted, and her hands supporting her chest.	A woman in a white tank top and light blue leggings is in Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose), with her body in a V-shape and hands firmly on the floor.	A woman in a light blue tank top and light blue leggings is in a variation of Low Lunge, with one knee on the floor and the other foot flat on the floor, leaning forward.	A woman in a light blue tank top and light blue leggings is in a Standing Forward Bend, with her back straight and her head reaching towards her feet.	A woman in a light blue tank top and light blue leggings is in an Upward Salute, with her arms raised and hands joined above her head.	A woman in a light blue tank top and light blue leggings is in a variation of Mountain Pose, with her hands joined in a namaste at her heart center.
Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose) Raise your head up and look up, lifting your back off the ground vertebra by vertebra, receiving the radiant light of the sun.	Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose) Bow forward in another way by moving into Downward-Facing Dog.	Low Lunge, variation Step forward into Low Lunge with the opposite leg. Look up in aspiration to the heavens. You're allowing the lower chakras to be close to the earth while the upper chakras simultaneously aspire toward the heavens.	Standing Forward Bend	Upward Salute	Mountain Pose, variation Move into namaste with prayerful hands at your heart. Rest here for a few breaths, feeling the effects. Repeat on the other side.

► TO END Finish with these eight poses from Sun Salutation B.



A man in a blue tank top and black shorts is in Parivrtta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose), with his right leg extended back and his torso reaching forward.	A man in a blue tank top and black shorts is in Parivrtta Parsvakonasana (Revolved Side Angle Pose), with his left foot back and his torso reaching forward.	A man in a blue tank top and black shorts is in Warrior Pose I, with his arms raised overhead and his right leg extended back.	A man in a blue tank top and black shorts is in Chaturanga Dandasana (Four-Limbed Staff Pose), in a low plank position.	A man in a blue tank top and black shorts is in Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward-Facing Dog Pose), with his body in a V-shape and hands firmly on the floor.	A man in a blue tank top and black shorts is in Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose), with his body in a V-shape and hands firmly on the floor.
Parivrtta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose) Straighten your right leg, turn your back foot in, and internally rotate your left thigh. Place your left hand to the outside of your right foot. Draw your right hip back and down, extend your right arm up, and open your chest. Hold for 5–10 breaths.	Parivrtta Parsvakonasana (Revolved Side Angle Pose) Move your left foot back about a foot and bend your right knee over your right ankle. Move your right hip back and in, drawing your sitting bones toward each other. Press into the outer edge of your left foot. Hold for 5–10 breaths.	Warrior Pose I Raise arms overhead while lifting from the tailbone toward the navel and moving the arms and torso into a vertical position. Turn the back foot slightly in and ground the outer edge, while squaring the hips and torso. Hold for 5–10 breaths.	Chaturanga Dandasana (Four-Limbed Staff Pose) On an exhale, bring your hands to the floor; step back with your right leg. Bend your arms and lower your chest until your shoulders are the same height as your elbows, balancing on your toes, keeping your thighs and midsection firm.	Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward-Facing Dog Pose) On an inhale, push forward through your toes and bring your chest upward until your arms are straight, pressing firmly into the tops of your feet as you broaden your chest and roll your shoulders out and down away from your ears.	Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose) Pull your toes forward until you can use the toe tips as pivot points, then flip feet and push back through your hands, moving shoulders back. Drop your head and press through your heels. Hold for 5–10 breaths. Repeat sequence on other side.

A woman in an orange tank top and orange leggings is in Thunderbolt Pose, variation, with her knees on the floor and arms extended wide.	A woman in an orange tank top and orange leggings is in Anjaneyasana (Low Lunge), variation, with her right foot forward and hands on blocks.	A woman in an orange tank top and orange leggings is in Parsvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch), variation, with her right foot forward and hands on blocks.	A woman in an orange tank top and orange leggings is in a variation of Low Lunge, with one knee on the floor and the other foot flat on the floor, leaning forward.	A woman in an orange tank top and orange leggings is in Anahatasana (Puppy Pose), with her torso and head down and hands on the floor.	A woman in an orange tank top and orange leggings is in Thunderbolt Pose, variation, with her hands folded at her heart in Anjali Mudra.
Thunderbolt Pose, variation Begin again with the next inhale, standing on the knees for Thunderbolt Pose, sweeping arms wide again. Repeat the sequence from the beginning a few times.	Anjaneyasana (Low Lunge), variation When warmed up, bring the right foot forward and set the shin perpendicular to the floor to support the knee. Place fingertips on either side of the front leg propped on blocks. Hold for 3–4 breaths.	Parsvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch), variation Draw your hips back toward your heels and flex your front foot. Either keep your right knee slightly bent or move into a full extension of the leg for a few breaths.	Low Lunge, variation Transition back into Low Lunge position, moving the pelvis forward and allowing the hip flexors and quads to stretch. Repeat the Lunge-to-Parsvottanasana sequence 2–3 times. Switch sides.	Anahatasana (Puppy Pose) After lunging on both sides, keep your knees on the floor and rotate your pelvis forward, extending the spine for Puppy Pose before beginning the whole sequence again.	Thunderbolt Pose, variation Return to Thunderbolt Pose with hands folded at the heart in Anjali Mudra.

Break away
from your
green bean
routine



Green beans, French beans, string beans — no matter what you call them, the slender, edible pods are nutritious and delicious. And because they are grown all-year round in Queensland, they're available all throughout winter.

It's hard to beat the sweet simplicity of a dish of green beans, cooked to crisp-tenderness and tossed with butter or olive oil (and maybe a little garlic and lemon for good measure), but why not try one of these bold-flavoured recipes that showcase their versatility?

1 food | 5 ways Green Beans

By Mary Margaret Chappell



Thai Green Bean Curry
with Pineapple and
Sweet Potatoes, p. 66



Pink Peppercorn Green Bean Pickles

colour changes

Go ahead, let yourself be tempted by luminescent wax and opulent purple beans to brighten your recipes. The colourful varieties can be used interchangeably with green beans. Just don't expect the purple beans to keep their royal hue when cooked! The anthocyanin pigments that give them their gorgeous colour will fade when heated

Pink Peppercorn Green Bean Pickles

MAKES 2 400ML JARS (ABOUT 80 GREEN BEANS)

For colour and flavour in homemade pickles, pink peppercorns can't be beat. Use these pickled green beans to jazz up salad plates, sandwiches, and martini cocktails. For best flavour, store at least one week at room temperature before using.

- 350 grams green beans, trimmed and cut to size of jars
- 2 tbs. dried pink peppercorns
- 2 tsp. whole coriander
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup rice vinegar or white distilled (5%) vinegar
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. salt

1 Divide green beans, peppercorns, coriander, garlic, and bay leaves between two 240ml canning jars (masonjarsales.com.au).

2 Combine vinegar, sugar, salt, and 1 cup water in medium saucepan, and bring to rolling boil. Divide vinegar mixture between jars with green beans, and close with lids.

3 Place jars on rack or small plate in large pot, and cover with water by 2cm. Bring water to a boil, and boil 10 minutes to seal.

PER SERVING (4 GREEN BEANS) 8 cal; <1 g prot; <1 g total fat (<1 g sat fat); 2 g carb; 0 mg chol; 52 mg sod; <1 g fiber; <1 g sugars

Green Bean Salad with Feta and Walnuts

SERVES 6 | 30 MINUTES OR LESS

Crisp-tender green beans add body to this Greek-style salad.

Salad

- 250 grams green beans, trimmed (4 cups)
- ½ small head romaine lettuce, halved and thinly sliced (2 cups)
- 1 small red onion, halved and thinly sliced (1 cup)
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- ½ cup halved cherry tomatoes
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts

Dressing

- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 2 tsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced (1 tsp.)
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 Tbs. vegetable oil

1 To make Salad: Cook green beans in large pot of boiling salted water 4 minutes. Drain, rinse under cold water, and drain again. Pat dry.

2 To make Dressing: rub oregano between fingers to crumble and release aromatic oils, and place in small bowl. Whisk in vinegar and garlic. Whisk in olive oil and vegetable oil, and season with salt and pepper, if desired.

3 Toss green beans, lettuce, and onion together with dressing in large bowl. Fold in feta, tomatoes, and walnuts.

PER 1-CUP SERVING 173 cal; 6 g prot; 13 g total fat (5 g sat fat); 9 g carb; 22 mg chol; 236 mg sod; 3 g fiber; 5 g sugars



Green Bean Salad with
Feta and Walnuts

scissor trick

There's something wonderfully soothing about snapping or stringing beans by hand into a big bowl, but if you're short on time, you can easily trim the bean ends using scissors. Simply grab five or six beans in one hand, then snip off both ends of each bean with scissors.

Sesame Green Beans

SERVES 6 | 30 MINUTES OR LESS

Tahini, a ground sesame paste used in Middle Eastern cooking, gives these beans a rich, nutty flavour via a creamy dairy-free dressing. They're good hot or cold.

- 700 grams green beans, trimmed
- 3 Tbs. tahini paste
- 3 Tbs. lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, minced (1 tsp.)
- 1½ tsp. gomasio (Japanese seasoned salt) or toasted black or white sesame seeds

1 Cook green beans in large pot of boiling salted water 4 minutes, or until crisp-tender.

2 Meanwhile, whisk together tahini, lemon juice, and garlic in small bowl.

3 Drain green beans, and reserve 2 Tbs. cooking water. Stir cooking water into tahini mixture. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.

4 Toss green beans with tahini mixture, and sprinkle with gomasio. Alternately, line green beans up on platter, pour tahini sauce down centre, and sprinkle with gomasio.

PER 1-CUP SERVING 83 cal; 3 g prot; 4 g total fat (<1 g sat fat); 9 g carb; 0 mg chol; 77 mg sod; 3 g fiber; 3 g sugars

Thai Green Bean Curry with Pineapple and Sweet Potatoes

SERVES 6

Blending part of the sweet potatoes into the broth of this hearty dish yields a rich, creamy curry base without an excessive amount of coconut milk.

- 1 Tbs. vegetable oil
- 3 large shallots (1/2 cup)
- 1½ Tbs. red curry paste
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
- 2 tsp. minced fresh ginger

- 1 250ml can of pineapple chunks, juice reserved
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2cm chunks (2½ cups)
- 350 grams green beans
- ¾ cup light coconut milk
- Basil or cilantro leaves, for garnish

1 Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots, and sauté for 5 minutes. Add curry paste, garlic, and ginger, and sauté 30 seconds, or until fragrant. Add 2½ cups water and reserved pineapple juice. Cover, and simmer 10 minutes. Add 1 cup

sweet potato chunks, and cook 10 to 15 minutes, or until sweet potatoes are tender.

2 Blend mixture in saucepan with immersion blender or in blender or food processor until smooth. Return to saucepan, add remaining 1½ cups sweet potatoes, and bring to a boil. Cover, and simmer 5 minutes. Stir in pineapple chunks, green beans, and coconut milk; cover, and simmer 7 to 10 minutes, or until green beans are crisp-tender. Garnish with basil, and serve.

PER 1-CUP SERVING 148 cal; 3 g prot; 4 g total fat (2 g sat fat); 25 g carb; 0 mg chol; 294 mg sod; 4 g fiber; 12 g sugars



Dry-Fried Szechuan Green Beans

SERVES 4 | 30 MINUTES OR LESS

Spicy and satisfying, this Chinese restaurant favourite is easy to re-create at home. Serve with steamed wild rice.

- 8 green onions, white parts only, thinly sliced (½ cup)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced (4 tsp.)
- 4 tsp. minced fresh ginger
- 2 Tbs. mirin (rice wine)
- 4 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce or tamari
- 2 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 1–2 tsp. chilli-garlic sauce
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 500 grams green beans, trimmed and halved (4 cups)
- 220 grams shiitake or button mushrooms, thinly sliced (3 cups)
- 9 dried Thai bird chillies, optional

1 Combine green onions, garlic, and ginger in small bowl; set aside. Combine mirin, soy sauce, sesame oil, chilli-garlic sauce, and 2 tsp. water in separate bowl; set aside.

2 Heat vegetable oil in wok or large skillet over high heat. Add green beans, and cook 5 minutes, or until browned and blistered all over, stirring occasionally. Transfer to paper-towel-lined plate, and set aside.

3 Drain all but 1 Tbs. oil from wok, and heat over high heat. Add green onion mixture, and stir-fry 30 seconds. Add mushrooms, and stir-fry 2 to 3 minutes, or until browned

and tender. Return green beans to wok, and add dried chillies (if using). Stir-fry 30 seconds to heat through. Remove from heat, and stir in soy sauce mixture, letting heat from pan thicken sauce while you stir-fry.

PER 1-CUP SERVING 163 cal; 4 g prot; 10 g total fat (<1 g sat fat); 16 g carb; 0 mg chol; 254 mg sod; 4 g fiber; 8 g sugars 

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The scandals that beset gurus John Friend and Bikram Choudhury continue to ripple through the yoga community, socially, financially and ethically. *Yoga Journal* takes a look at how deep the damage goes and how wrongdoing changes – or doesn't – yogis, the practice and the business of yoga.

BY ANDREW TILIN

sweat & tears



PAULA CARRASQUILLO took her first yoga class in the autumn of 2011. A website-content developer, wife, and mother, she had decided to try Bikram Choudhury's wildly popular brand because she thought it could help her right knee, which had been injured in a car crash and never healed. She read testimonials online of how Bikram Yoga in particular had fixed broken bodies in ways that scalpels sometimes can't.

Within three classes her knee felt better, and within three months of practicing the 26 asanas and breathing exercises that comprise every 90-minute, high-heat Bikram Yoga class, Carrasquillo says her blood pressure went down and she lost unwanted weight. The transformation didn't stop there. Another month in, yoga along with therapy and writing helped Carrasquillo realise that she was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The domestic abuse Carrasquillo says she experienced years prior with former partners still haunted her. "Yoga allowed the deep pain that was interfering with my whole life to surface, so I could confront it," she says. Carrasquillo believes yoga helped wean her off anti-depressants and alcohol, too.

But by spring 2013, Carrasquillo had learned that several Bikram students had accused Choudhury of sexual harassment and rape. At first she kept practicing, refusing to associate Choudhury's potential wrongdoings with her beloved yoga. But ultimately the allegations became too much. One day in the autumn of 2013, while standing at the front of her mat, Carrasquillo became nauseous. She realised the practice she'd come to crave for helping her heal was hurting her instead.

Carrasquillo's story of emotional turmoil isn't unique. Scores of people who have found a practice, teacher, community,

and sometimes a career through yoga have been thrown for a loop when a revered leader is accused of sexual harassment, emotional and economic fraud, and even breaking the law. Sadly, in Western yoga, there have been many such assertions.

More recently, reports of Choudhury's alleged missteps alternated in the mainstream news with stories of the suspected improprieties of John Friend, the founder of Anusara Yoga, which integrates yoga therapeutics, philosophy, and alignment. In February 2012, an Anusara employee claimed that Friend was having sexual relations with employees, leading an all-female Wiccan coven that practiced rituals of a sexual nature, freezing Anusara employee-benefit plans on the sly, and asking employees to accept shipments of marijuana. Nearly two months later, The Washington Post reported that Friend was having sex with students. In such high-profile scandals, the people directly involved—the "gurus" and their accusers—grab the public's attention. And while we would never downplay the gravity of their experiences, those newsmakers represent only a fraction of a far bigger story. It's the rest of the yoga community, the millions of students, teachers, and studio owners who come to the practice regularly for health, healing, and a sense of belonging, who make up the vast majority of the impacted.

Within the community, members are

left to sort through the wreckage after the polarised voices around fallen leaders finally quiet, deciding where to turn after their tribes splinter. They must maintain their identities and possibly livelihoods after some practices are abandoned, and some studios close. They have to learn from the past and better prepare—emotionally, socially, and financially—for the next upset, which unfortunately seems all but inevitable. In fact, this February, *The New York Times* reported a sixth civil lawsuit filed against Choudhury. (The first case is scheduled to go to trial in August.) In a world where even iconic gurus can apparently come and go, everyday yogis and teachers are the ones who need to minimise the damage, and protect the practice that they love.

A Personal Hit

When rumours started to surface in 2013 about Choudhury, Carrasquillo felt what many felt during the recent scandals: conflicted. She wanted to support Choudhury's accusers, but Carrasquillo had also become attached to Bikram Yoga's apparent healing powers. "I just didn't want to believe it, simply because I enjoyed the yoga so much," she says.

Carrasquillo spent nearly a year trying to convince herself that she could continue to practice despite her anger around the allegations. Then one day in November 2013, her yoga teacher was reading the standard Bikram teaching script in class, like usual. But this time Carrasquillo had a strong visceral reaction. "I wanted to vomit. I couldn't do it anymore," she says. "The healing that I had experienced up to that point was in danger." After that class, she vowed never to go back to Bikram Yoga.

While Carrasquillo's personal history may not mirror everyone's, many people come to yoga for physical reasons—either to work out an injury or get in shape—and are quickly swept up in the holistic healing that yoga can provide. Research has linked the practice with improvements in stress, depression, anxiety, and even post-traumatic stress disorder. One explanation is that mindfulness methods such as yoga and meditation help us become aware of the emotional baggage we carry and teach us how to use our breath to de-stress, suggests psychiatrist Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, in his new book, *The Body Keeps the Score*.

Paradoxically, while unearthing deep-seated emotions can empower us to confront sadness, anger, or pain, such work



can also make us more vulnerable to emotional injury when a trusted leader falls, explains Dave Emerson, author of *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga in Therapy* and director of Yoga Services at van der Kolk's Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute in Brookline, Massachusetts. Witnessing a yoga leader fall may be especially painful for someone who has experienced past relationship trauma, Emerson says. "Yoga teachers often promise happiness and health, and students therefore expect them to be safe and trustworthy," he explains. "So it can be devastating when a teacher betrays or disappoints you, throwing you back to feeling unsafe within relationships that you thought you could rely on."

The betrayal can also make us question our sense of judgment, the validity of a healing modality, and any progress we've made, explains Rachel Allyn, PhD, a clinical psychologist and yoga teacher, and the creator of YogaPsych psychotherapy, which uses asana and breath exercises to help stored emotions come to the surface. Initially, denial is common; it's a way to minimise the discomfort that comes from believing strongly in something that becomes corrupt or disingenuous, but that we still want to engage in, she explains.

While Carrasquillo struggled to come to terms with how her loyalty to Bikram Yoga conflicted with her desire to empathise with those accusing the founder of rape, the resulting emotional stress and feelings of guilt and hypocrisy—something psychologists call cognitive dissonance—ate away at her. She knew that leaving her practice was the best way to show her allegiance to those claiming abuse, and yet



Feelings of guilt and hypocrisy—something psychologists call cognitive dissonance—ate away at her...

she was scared to abandon that which she had given so much credit for her healing. So Carrasquillo justified staying longer, telling herself, "[Choudhury] is not my boss, and the teachers I had were not him; I am loyal to those teachers. He created a great sequence; lots of bad people create good things."

Cognitive dissonance is certainly part of being human, says Allyn. But when we continue to engage in behaviours that go against our morals and ethics, it can threaten our sense of identity. This can lead to feelings of shame, and from there, depression and anxiety. But here, again, yoga and meditation can help. "Yoga helps you confront yourself, both the light and dark, in a kind-hearted way," Allyn says. "It allows you to see yourself clearly, still love yourself, and want to learn." You can learn, for example, what Carrasquillo would someday deduce: the

power of one's practice is not exclusively tied to one teacher or method.

A Community, Fractured

William "Doc" Savage practiced various styles of yoga for four years, trying to improve his performance as an ultramarathon runner, before stumbling upon an Anusara "Grand Gathering" at a *Yoga Journal* conference in 2008. Savage was blown away by the sense of belonging he experienced there. "I looked around and thought, 'Wow, these are my people,'" Savage says. "It was a community of extroverts," he adds, describing people chatting and spending time on each other's mats.

A retired senior non-commissioned officer in the United States Air Force, Savage is gregarious, but also admits to a long-time isolating fear of showing raw emotion. One of the tenets of Anusara, which means "flowing with grace," is opening your heart to connect with the divine within you, and in everyone. "With Anusara, I learned how to share my emotions," says Savage. "It was scary, but I was empowered knowing I had teachers and a community who were going to help

Only in America?

Not necessarily. In March this year, Fairfax media reported that Shiva School of Meditation and Yoga at Mount Eliza in Victoria was under investigation, "with a number of victims alleging in recent days that they had been sexually abused." The report claims one woman had been pressured into sexual relations while she was seeking enlightenment and healing.

A later report appearing in *The Age* by Jane Lee claimed; "The school's founder and 'guru' Swami Shankarananda, 73 - also known as Russell Kruckman - resigned as director in January but remained its spiritual head after it was revealed he had had sexual relationships with up to 40 women there." At the time of going to press, the school had announced that it would close and end its public yoga and meditation programs.



“The saddest part was that the community used to be a real asset,” she says. “It was scarring and disillusioning how everyone scattered.”

and support me.”

When Friend’s alleged transgressions were exposed in 2012, Savage felt disappointed and frustrated—equally by Friend’s behaviour and the community response and infighting. He witnessed Anusara splinter as practitioners and teachers found smaller groups they could confide in and vent to. Savage did what he found necessary to hide his deep disappointment and sadness and to retain his composure. “I was my students’ teacher, and I just tried to continue,” says Savage. “I compartmentalised.”

Decades of social-science research show that community, along with faith and work, is the secret to emotional well-being. At the Harvard School of Public Health, researchers have found that the keys to happiness include a supportive network of family and friends, and knowing how to bounce back from stressful situations.

Basically, community gives us identity and a sense of purpose, which in turn keep us happy and healthy.

Which helps explain why, as the Friend scandal broke, Savage didn’t want to reinvent his identity. He had already invested in an entry-level Anusara teacher training and had just entered into the full teacher-certification program. “Every time I tried to teach something other than Anusara, it didn’t feel right,” he says. So he continued teaching Friend’s method, even as the business was failing. Back at the Anusara headquarters, the administrative staff had significantly downsized, and many of the senior teachers who helped organise events and trainings had departed. Savage’s community—and the ground beneath him—was crumbling.

In July of 2012, Savage and two other Anusara devotees started damage control. They signed a licensing agreement with

Friend to use his intellectual property, and in October incorporated as First Principle, Inc., calling themselves the Anusara School of Hatha Yoga and listing themselves as the only three teachers. That number has since jumped to just over 550 today, with up to 55,000 students—a huge decline from the nearly 1,500 teachers and estimated 600,000 students pre-scandal. But Savage and his colleagues are more intent on ensuring history doesn’t repeat itself. They’ve installed a board of directors, elected by teachers and global representatives, who continue to develop the Anusara curriculum. “We want to avoid a single point of failure,” a criticism many teachers had about Anusara under John Friend, Savage says. “I reformed Anusara to help people have community again.”

Of course, not everyone has returned, including former top Anusara teachers Elena Brower, Amy Ippoliti, and Desirée Rumbaugh, who have moved on to pursue new businesses and host non-Anusara trainings and retreats. One senior Anusara teacher who wished to remain anonymous says that she is now happy to be a part of the bigger yoga community, but also

laments the loss of the tight-knit group of people she came together with to practice Anusara. "The saddest part was that the community used to be a real asset," she says. "It was scarring and disillusioning how everyone scattered."

A New Business Model

Years after the Bikram and Anusara shakeups first came to light, the founder of each yoga style continues to make the news. Choudhury—who did not respond to *Yoga Journal*'s requests to be interviewed—was still teaching as of April, according to his website, and he appeared on CNN in April saying that he is innocent. Friend, who admitted to at least one affair, dismissed Anusara and returned in early 2013 with a new yoga form called Sridaiva, or "divine destiny," which he developed with a former Anusara student. "I feel good about where I am and where I'm going," says Friend. "I will remember my faults and mistakes and try not to replicate what patterns led to pain and disharmony."

In the wake of the scandals, many teachers and studio owners are actively trying to create a different, less rigid, more diversified way both to teach and do business, and in the process redefining the role of a "guru." Noah Mazé, who taught Anusara from 2002 until the Friend scandal broke, is one such pioneer. Mazé resigned from Anusara because he didn't align with Friend's choices after the scandal. He had also expressed concern over how obstinate he felt Friend was becoming. When Friend debuted Anusara in 1997, it was a hybrid of alignment, therapeutics, and Tantric philosophy, but toward the end he stopped incorporating other teachings and evolving the practice. Mazé was frustrated with Friend's inability to hear criticism or suggestions for improving Anusara (a critique many teachers share of both Friend and Choudhury). Mazé, who now owns YogaMazé in Hollywood, California, has developed his own style. But he says it's influenced by other types of yoga, as well as the study of biomechanics and physical therapy.

Diversification and independence seem to be paying off for former Bikram studio owners, too, thanks in part to Mark Drost, once a high-ranking Bikram instructor. In 2004, Drost owned seven Bikram studios, but by 2008 he says he was so put off by what he saw as the guru's questionable business methods and connections with female students that he purged himself of all Bikram affiliation and converted one of

Still, the question remains: how did Choudhury and Friend obtain so much power in the first place?

his former Bikram studios, in Buffalo, New York, into Evolution Yoga (in 2009).

Evolution offers hot yoga classes similar to the 26-pose Bikram sequence. In 2011, Choudhury sued Drost for copyright infringement, but Drost refused to settle out of court, and in December 2012, a judge ruled against Choudhury having exclusive claim to a yoga sequence. Suddenly, yoga-studio doors swung wide open for anyone to offer the Bikram Yoga sequence, or any other sequence of poses. More and more one-time Bikram Yoga studio owners have quietly migrated away from Bikram affiliations and are instead offering the same or a similar sequence under a different name.

Still, the question remains: how did Choudhury and Friend obtain so much power in the first place? "They presented their systems as salvation paths, and people bought into the idea that their way was the best way," explains Lola Williamson, PhD, an associate professor of religious studies at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, and co-editor of *Homegrown Gurus*.

Understandably, many teachers seem highly aware of the potential slippery slope between instruction and adulation. Some worry that the authority they need to deliver a profoundly deep, enduring knowledge of yoga has become off-limits. "We're fearful of being seen as manipulative," says the Anusara teacher who wanted to remain nameless. "I'm more wary to suggest a mentor relationship."

Mazé, too, remains sensitive about his relationship with students. He'll sometimes practice at the back of the room, and says that a guru's role is to stimulate dialogue and debate instead of to suppress them. "Don't surrender your critical thinking to anyone," he tells practitioners. "I want my students and community to be comfortable questioning any of my teachings."

Carol Horton, PhD, a yoga teacher and former political-science professor who writes about student-teacher relationships, suggests that teacher trainings should prepare instructors for dealing with the complex emotions that yoga can unearth. "When a

student comes to class, he or she should have the assurance that the teacher is doing the work necessary to create a safe space, where students can explore how to empower themselves through yoga," she says. Teachers also have to be grounded enough to withstand students' projections, she adds.

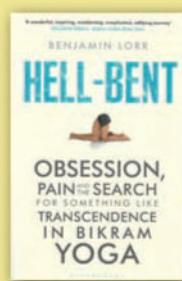
A Full Recovery

But the responsibility of making yoga a safe place for everyone can't lie in the hands of teachers alone. Students need to be empowered to heal themselves, instead of looking to someone else for salvation, says Allyn, and that requires being aware of and trusting their feelings and thoughts. Receive knowledge and wisdom from gifted instructors, says Allyn, but never credit a teacher with healing you. She suggests asking yourself, "Am I turning to my teacher, like I would a partner, to heal old wounds?" If the answer is yes, consider trying new yoga styles and communities to see if the healing properties of the practice carry with you. Or, revisit the yogic principle of *aparigraha*, or nonclinging. Most importantly, embrace who you are: "A strong community can only exist when the people who make up that community are strong within themselves, affirming that they are perfect in their imperfection, just as their teacher or guru is," says Williamson.

Carrasquillo is on board. "We each have an inner guru to be discovered," says the former Bikram devotee, who eventually developed a regular home practice, completed a non-Bikram teacher training, and, last year, started teaching vinyasa classes in corporate settings. "I don't want students to look up to me. I want them to look within to find the answers." ☺

YJ Recommends...

Hell Bent Published in 2013, *Hell-Bent* is a look at the science behind the controversial practice of Bikram Yoga, a story of greed and corruption, and a mind-bending tale of personal transformation that will change the way you view both bikram yoga and the inspirational potential of the human body.





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Poses of the month

How to move from Urdhva Hastasana to Adho Mukha Vrksasana

By Nikki Vilella

Urdhva Hastasana

urdhva = raised · hasta = hands · asana = pose

Upward Salute

Benefit

Teaches extension from the ground up, lengthens the side waist, strengthens arms and shoulders

Instruction

- 1 From standing, bring the balls of the feet to touch, leaving a narrow space between your heels. Ground down through the four corners of each foot. Lift and spread your toes—this will help you lift your arches and inner ankles and get a sense of where your midline is. Then engage your quadriceps. Maintain the lift in your arches and legs as you release your toes down.
- 2 Neutralise your pelvis by anchoring the tailbone toward your heels and moving the tops of the buttocks down. This helps prevent an exaggerated curve in the lumbar spine and keeps the lower front ribs from splaying out, which can interfere with maintaining a strong line of extension in both Upward Salute and Handstand.
- 3 Inhale your arms out to the sides, parallel to the floor. Exhale to externally rotate from the top of the humerus bones, where the arms insert into your shoulders. Draw the bottom tips of your shoulder blades toward your spine, widen your collarbones, and broaden your chest.
- 4 On an inhalation, raise your arms alongside your ears. On an exhalation, root down through your feet.
- 5 Inhale to lengthen the sides of your waist even more and reach up through the crown of the head. Exhale to firm your arms closer to your ears and midline. Make sure your lower ribs are not splaying out. Keep your gaze at the horizon, your chin level, and your throat soft and open. Hold here for 8 breaths before exhaling the arms down.



DON'T let your elbows bend or your arms go wide, which will result in a loss of length in the sides of your waist.



DON'T let your front ribs pop out and your pelvis drop into an anterior tilt, which can create "banana back." An exaggerated lumbar curve in Upward Salute will cause you to lose the rooting action of your tailbone and decrease the power found in a more streamlined spinal extension.

Our Pro Teacher and model **Nikki Vilella** is a senior teacher at Kula Yoga Project in New York City and owner of Kula Williamsburg in her home borough of Brooklyn. She has trained with Kula founder Schuyler Grant and Kula senior teacher Alison Sinatra; she studies Iyengar with Nikki Costello, Genny Kapuler, and Carrie Owerko, and anatomy with Lauren Haythe. For more, visit kulayoga.com.

Modify Urdhva Hastasana if needed to find safe alignment for your body



If you have trouble engaging your legs and grounding through your feet ...

TRY placing a block on its narrow side between your inner upper thighs, close to your pubic bone. Lift your toes and then firm your inner thighs around the block. Lift your quadriceps and roll your inner thighs back, as if you were trying to pass the block to someone behind you. This will create more space in your lower back. Then squeeze your outer hips in and lengthen the tailbone down toward the block. The dual action of internally rotating your inner thighs and strongly rooting your tailbone will neutralize your pelvis and help you find strength in your legs, which you'll need for Handstand. The block gives you something to squeeze into and helps you realise each of these actions. Hold for 8 breaths before exhaling to release your arms.



If your shoulders and wrists feel tight ...

TRY Baddha Guliasana (Bound Fingers Pose) ... Stand in Tadasana (Mountain Pose) with your palms pressing together at the center of your chest. Interlace your fingers at their roots, so that the webbing connects and forms a fist. Invert your palms so that they face the front of the room, and extend through your elbows until the arms are straight. On an inhalation, lift your arms alongside your ears and hug them in, toward your midline. When you reach up, extend all the way from the bottom sides of the waist to the heels of your palms. Do not over-bend your fingers; instead, open your wrists by pressing up through the base of the palms. Hold for 8 breaths before exhaling to release your hands and lower your arms.



If you are having trouble getting your arms alongside your ears ...

TRY working the legs, chest, and pelvis as you would in Tadasana, and bring one arm at a time into Ardha Gomukhasana arms (Half Cow Face Pose arms). Limitation in this motion could mean that you are tight in the latissimus dorsi muscles (on the mid to lower back) and tricep muscles (at the back of the upper arms). Lift your left arm, externally rotate it, and then bend at the elbow. Use your right hand to gently draw the left elbow behind the head. Rest the left hand between the shoulder blades. Hold here for 8 breaths before exhaling to release your arms. Switch sides. Over time, this will help you to bring your arms alongside your ears.

FIND YOUR EDGE

You know you are at your edge when you meet the boundaries of your comfort zone. In order to grow, you need to explore those boundaries with courage. There is an idea in yoga that the heat of an experience is what can transform you; the word that embodies this idea is *tapas*. Handstand is a pose that serves as the spark that initiates transformation and growth, which stems from a broadening of perspective. When you turn your world upside down, you are pushed to your edge in a way that insists you rediscover your center of balance in order to thrive. When you are inverted, finding and staying tethered to your center and midline take effort, but the combination of a deep, internal focus and a willingness to experiment can be the starting point.

Lengthen the hamstrings, hone midline awareness, and cultivate balance with these **prep poses** for Adho Mukha Vrksasana

Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose)

Benefit

Strengthens the upper body, lengthens the hamstring and calf muscles, fosters introspection and calm

Instruction

Start in Table Top pose. Place your palms shoulder-width apart, with your index fingers parallel. Ground evenly through all four corners of your palms. Externally rotate your upper-arm bones and internally rotate your forearms. On an exhalation, tuck your toes, lift your knees, and straighten your legs. Your feet should be sitting-bones-width apart. Lift your quadriceps and press your thighbones away from your chest and arms. Reach your sitting bones up and your heels down, stretching the backs of your legs. As you press your palms down into the floor, reach your pelvis in the opposite direction and lengthen through the side waist. Avoid rounding the upper back. Smooth out the front ribs. Contract the trapezius muscles, between your shoulder blades, so that you can soften the upper trapezius muscles along your neck. Stay here for 10 breaths before exhaling back to Table Top pose.



Urdhva Prasarita Ekapadasana (Standing Splits)

Benefit

Stretches the hamstrings of the standing leg, strengthens the hamstrings and glutes of the lifted leg, cultivates balance, and shifts perspective

Instruction

Stand in Tadasana. Inhale to Urdhva Hastasana and then exhale to Uttanasana (Standing Forward Bend). Firmly ground down through your standing, right foot and lift your right quadricep muscles. Inhale and lead with the inner thigh as you lift your left leg. Make sure you internally rotate your left leg and hug the midline with the inner seam of the leg. Don't let the left hip open or the left leg bend. Extend the spine so that the back doesn't round. Hold for 8 breaths and then release the left leg down. Take an easy Uttanasana, then switch sides.



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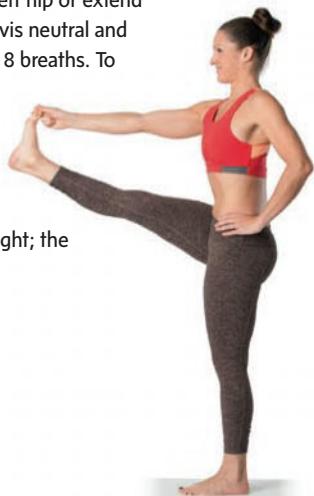
Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana (Extended Hand-to-Big-Toe Pose)

Benefit

Strengthens and stretches your legs, teaches the entry to Handstand

Instruction

From Tadasana, draw the right knee to the chest and interlace the first two fingers around the right big toe. Point your left foot forward, lift your left kneecap, and press your left femur back. Keep the chest lifted. Exhale to straighten your right leg as much as possible. Roll your outer right hip down, away from the armpit. Either keep the left hand on the left hip or extend the arm alongside your left ear. Keep the pelvis neutral and use your breath to spread the chest. Hold for 8 breaths. To come out, bend the right knee, release the toe, and hug the knee in before returning the right foot to the floor. Repeat on the other side. The standing leg becomes the first leg up into Handstand, so it's crucial that it remains straight; the lifted leg, however, can bend if necessary.



Find your edge and shift your weight into your hands as you move **step by step** into Adho Mukha Vrksasana

Benefit

Energizes, builds confidence, hones attention and focus, shifts perspective, strengthens your upper body, and reverses the effects of gravity (compression and shortening) on your spine



Instruction

1 Start in Adho Mukha Svanasana. Bring your feet together at the midline; spread your palms and press them into the floor. Stretch through the sides of the waist and fortify your legs. Start to lift the heels, shifting some of your weight into the balls of the feet.

2 Step your right foot forward halfway to your hands and bring your shoulders over your wrists. Allow your right knee to bend. Keep the ball of the right foot on the floor but lift the heel. Press down firmly through your hands and lift your left leg into Standing Splits. Remember to lift your left inner thigh toward the ceiling and make your leg straight, like an arrow. Wrap your biceps forward. Push firmly down into your hands and make your arms completely straight, like pillars. Find a focal point, or *drishti*, on the ground, a few inches in front of your hands.



3 Keep your arms firm. Bend the right knee deeply and take a small hop off the right foot. It is paramount that as you transition weight onto your hands, you lift up through the inner left thigh (as opposed to reaching the left leg behind you). Draw the lower belly in to support the pelvis. Do not aim to get your legs overhead; instead, aim to place your pelvis over your chest and shoulders. When you lead with your legs and not your pelvis, you will often backbend and find balance elusive. Eventually, you will be able to bring the right leg parallel to the floor into an inverted Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana. At this stage, don't lift the right leg higher—it will serve as an anchor and keep you from flipping over. Once you have the right leg parallel to the floor, internally rotate the thighs, drawing them energetically into the midline. Your legs should feel like scissor blades: bolted firmly into their common point (the pelvis) and moving along, but not away from, the midline.



Adho Mukha Vrksasana

adho = downward · mukha = face · vrksa = tree · asana = pose

Handstand



4 Once you have found balance, draw your legs together. Push down into the hands and actively reach up through the feet and legs. As you hug your legs into the midline, move the tailbone and the tops of the buttocks toward your heels. This will introduce length to the lumbar spine. Draw your lower ribs toward the frontal hipbones to prevent any backbending. Make your body feel like an inverted Urdhva Hastasana. Grow even taller by reaching your legs strongly up and away from your rooted and stable palms. Hold for 5 to 8 breaths. To release, step your right foot down, then your left, and take Pada Hastasana (Foot-to-Hand Pose) to stretch the wrists. ☀

Stay safe

In Handstand, distribute the weight evenly from your outer palm to your inner palm by pressing equally into the mounds at the base of each finger. Avoid cupping the hands, so that there is no unnecessary compression in your outer wrists. Keep your upper arms firm and your elbows straight to prevent buckling and instability. Reach up strongly through the feet, legs, and tailbone while engaging the core so that you do not dump into your lower back, creating "banana back" and compression in the lower spine. Practice at a wall until you are comfortable being upside down. When practicing without a wall, start by bringing the second leg no higher than parallel to the floor—it will act as an anchor and prevent you from falling over into a backbend.

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Adho Mukha
Vrksasana

Body of knowledge

Understanding your tailbone

By Amy Matthews and Leslie Kaminoff

Healthy movement in your tailbone may
Influence your whole spine.

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD many a teacher say, “Tuck your tail,” in asana class, making it seem like a widely understood and accepted cue. But the phrase can be interpreted many different ways, often resulting in a chain reaction of unintended movement. We can tuck in a way that is efficient and effective, or in a way that leads to overwork and injury. In fact, what seems to be a single movement (tail tucking) can be three different anatomical actions, acting independently or in combination, each with its own sensations. Learning to feel these subtle differences in your body will help you find a place for your tail that feels right, whether you are standing in Tadasana or seated at your desk.

Before we get into tucking the tail, it's important to know what the tail is. The anatomical name for the tail is coccyx, from the Greek word for a cuckoo's beak. It is the “caudal,” meaning tail, section of the spine, below the triangular-shaped sacrum bone that lies between the two iliac hipbones of the pelvis at the sacroiliac joints. The number and mobility of vertebrae in the coccyx vary widely from person to person: you can have three, four, or even five vertebrae, and some may be naturally fused together while others are not. Although small, the coccyx is a site for muscle, ligament, and tendon attachments, and functions together with the two sitting bones as a tripod of bony landmarks at the base of the pelvis.

Every coccyx has a moveable joint at the bottom of the sacrum, appropriately named the sacrococcygeal joint. Its main movements are flexion and extension, with a little bit of side-bending and rotation possible as well. These movements are not very large, but the muscular actions that create them can have a significant effect on your pelvic floor. Chronic tension in the pelvic floor can affect the range of motion available in the hip joints, the

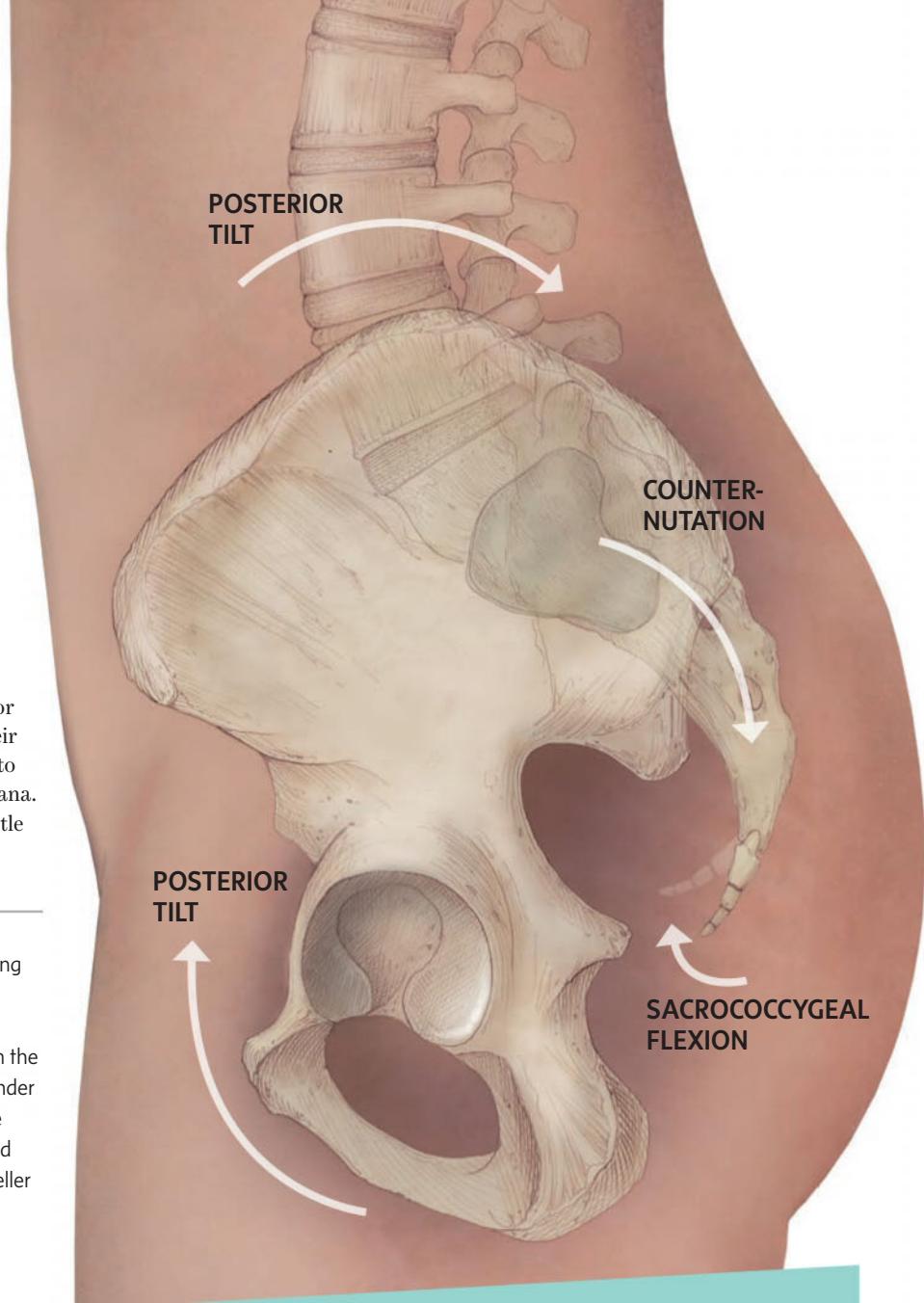
healthy functioning of the rectum, anus, and bladder, and can lead to pain and overwork in the lower back (lumbar spine and sacroiliac joints). Finding your healthiest and most functional movement in the tail can influence pain patterns throughout the spine, from the sacrum to the head.

There are three distinct actions that result in tucking the tail: sacrococcygeal flexion; counter-nutation (nutate means “to nod”), which is when the top of your sacrum tilts backward and the bottom of the sacrum and tailbone move forward at the sacroiliac joints; and posterior or backward tilting of the entire pelvis including the sacrum and tailbone. You can explore each of these movements separately, sequentially, or simultaneously using the exercises outlined in “A Practice of Discovery” in the box on the right. Each will move the tail forward, but only sacrococcygeal flexion involves the independent movement of the coccyx. Counter-nutation and posterior tilting might carry the tail forward in space, but only as a consequence of moving the sacrum or pelvis.

There are certainly times on the mat when it's useful to play with the interrelatedness of these three actions. In Child's Pose, for example, you may find a deepening of the flexion of your spine and hip joints when you also tuck your tail. On the other hand, because the muscles that flex your coccyx are distinct from the muscles you use to counter-nutate the sacrum and posteriorly tilt your pelvis, a teacher's “Tuck your tail” cue meant to change your pelvic position may excessively engage your pelvic-floor muscles (which flex the coccyx but don't tilt the pelvis posteriorly). Surplus effort can radiate into the muscles of your hips, pelvis, and spine and get in the way of finding your ideal combination of stability and ease in the posture.

With so much room for interpretation—





and no single cue that will definitively work for everyone, every time—yoga students need their teachers to create the space that allows them to find their way into their own experience of asana. The challenge for students is to notice the subtle shifts in breath and alignment that can, over time, expand their practice. ☀

Amy Matthews has been teaching anatomy and movement since 1994. She is a Body-Mind Centring and yoga teacher, and a somatic movement therapist. **Leslie Kaminoff** is an internationally recognised specialist with 36 years' experience in the fields of yoga and breath anatomy. He is the founder of The Breathing Project in New York City, where he and Matthews produce and teach their live and online courses. They also co-authored the bestseller *Yoga Anatomy*.

A Practice of Discovery

HOW TO EXPLORE

Sacrococcygeal flexion

Isolate the tailbone and flex it forward?

When you hear the instruction to "Tuck your tail," it could indicate the very specific movement of flexing at the sacrococcygeal joint, flexion that's created by engaging the muscles of the pelvic floor. Sit on a hard surface where you can clearly feel your sitting bones. Explore moving your tail without moving your sitting bones or spine. You might have to drastically diminish your muscular effort in order to find these movements—it's definitely not about working harder! Notice how these small shifts change the organization of the entire spine, travelling up from the pelvic floor.

HOW TO EXPLORE

Counter-nutation

Move the bottom of the sacrum and tail forward

Stand up so your pelvis and lower spine are freer to move. Find sacrococcygeal flexion again. Do you feel other movements where your sacrum meets your two pelvic halves at your sacroiliac joints? That is nutation and counter-nutation or nodding, tilting backward and forward. Place your hands on the top of your pelvis, and imagine your pelvic halves remaining stationary as your sacrum and tail tilt into counter-nutation. How does this affect your breathing, the rest of your spine, your nervous system? You may feel an unfamiliar combination of efforts in your pelvis and abdomen.

HOW TO EXPLORE

Posterior pelvic tilt

Move the top of the pelvis backward

Think back to when you attempted counter-nutation. Did you feel your entire pelvis wanting to participate? If you allow the movement to expand and include the whole pelvis, this is called posterior pelvic tilt. You'll discover that it not only moves the pelvis, sacrum, and coccyx, but also generates movement in your hip joints and lumbar spine. This action flattens your lumbar curve, extends your hip joints, or both, depending on your position and which other movements you allow or inhibit.

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10-, 20-, and 30-minute sequences to help you recharge

By Chelsea Jackson

WHETHER YOU SERVE as a volunteer, teacher, parent, or yoga instructor, helping others can be energizing and exhausting all at once. It's important to practice techniques that help you refuel and take care of yourself—as well as those you serve. This balancing, restorative sequence encourages you to "drink" as you "pour." Seated meditative poses support you as you drink in and recharge, and Warrior Poses, inversions, and backbends help you find strength as you pour out offerings to the world.

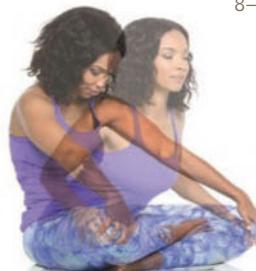
Prep work

Sit in Sukhasana (easy cross-legged pose) and close your eyes. Draw your awareness inward. Inhale through the nostrils and fill the torso from the lower belly to the collarbones. Exhale through the nostrils until the lower belly is empty of breath. Ensure the length of the in-breath is even to the length of the out-breath, creating stillness of mind. Breathe mindfully for a few breaths in Sukhasana, then continue to breathe fully, deeply and evenly throughout the following poses.

If you have 10 minutes,
try this practice.



1 minute,
8–10 breaths



Seated Cat-Cow Pose

Ground through your sitting bones. Place your hands on your knees. Deeply inhale to lean forward, rolling your shoulders back and bringing your heart forward. Then exhale to softly press your chin into your throat and roll your spine into gentle flexion, engaging your abdominal muscles. Drink in through an open heart on the inhalation, and pour out by engaging muscular energy as you exhale.

1 minute,
8–10 breaths,
each side



Seated Half Moon Pose

Open your eyes and place your right fingertips beside your right hip. Walk the fingers out, pressing the right shoulder blade into your back by externally rotating the shoulder. Inhale to extend your left arm up and exhale to reach it to the right, rotating your left shoulder back and expanding your left rib cage. Inhale, shift your gaze skyward; exhale, rotate your head and gaze at the ground. Exhale to release and switch sides, including the cross of your legs.

1 minute,
8–10 breaths,
each side



Seated Spinal Twist

With a long spine and grounded hips, bring your hands to Anjali Mudra (prayer pose) at the centre of your chest. On an inhalation, extend both arms up. On an exhalation, place your left hand on your right knee and your right hand on the ground behind you. Inhale to imagine your breath traveling up your spine and extending through the crown of your head. Exhale to press your navel toward your spine, externally rotate your right shoulder, and lift through the heart. Inhale back to center and switch sides.

1 minute,
8–10 breaths



Seated Forward Fold with Mudra

From Anjali Mudra, inhale to again extend both arms skyward, staying grounded through your hips. Exhale to reach both arms behind your lower back. Interlace your fingers. Gently press your shoulder blades into your back. Drinking in the breath, lift the chest upward. As you pour the breath out, bow forward and stretch your arms toward your head, releasing your forehead to the ground.

2 minutes,
16–20 breaths



Cat-Cow Pose

Come to all fours, placing your wrists beneath your shoulders and your knees directly below your hips. Curl your toes under and spread your fingers wide, with the index and middle fingers pointing forward. Inhale deeply to lift the heart and gaze. Tilt and separate the sitting bones towards the sky. Exhale to round the spine, drawing the navel to the spine and curling your chin to your chest.

End here with Balasana (Child's Pose) 2 minutes

OR, HAVE 10 MORE MINUTES? TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE TO EXTEND YOUR SEQUENCE.

practise well
HOME PRACTICE

If you have 20 minutes, add these poses to your sequence.



1 minute,
8–10 breaths



30 seconds,
4–5 breaths,
each side



1 minute,
8–10 breaths,
each side

Adho Mukha Svanasana

Downward-Facing Dog Pose

From Table Top, curl your toes under and press through all four corners of both palms to lift your hips, coming into Down Dog. Press through your heels, internally rotate your thighs, and press your heart toward your legs. Practice expanding your chest with every inhalation, drinking in, and with every exhalation, pouring out as the body stretches.

Tri Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana

Three-Legged Downward-Facing Dog Pose

From Down Dog, inhale to extend your right leg back, keeping the quadriceps engaged and pressing through the heel of your right foot. Ground through your left foot, pressing into the big-toe mound. Allow the shoulders and hips to remain level, without opening the body to the right.

Anjaneyasana

Low Lunge

Step your right foot forward between your hands, stacking your right knee over your right ankle. Engage your inner thighs, curl the left toes under, press into the big-toe mound of your left foot, and lift onto your fingertips. As you inhale and drink in, roll your shoulders back and open your heart. As you exhale and pour out, surrender deeply into the hip stretch.

If you have 30 minutes, add these poses to your sequence.



1 minute,
8–10 breaths,
each side



30 seconds,
4–5 breaths,
each side



1 minute,
8–10 breaths,
each side

Eka Pada Rajakapotasana, variation

One-Legged King Pigeon Pose, variation

Come to Down Dog then bring your right foot forward, resting the shin as close to perpendicular to the front of your mat as possible. Activate your right toes and square both hips and shoulders as you lift onto fingertips. Inhale to roll your shoulders back as you puff your chest. Exhale to surrender and fold as your heart pours out toward the earth.

Tri Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana

Three-Legged Downward-Facing Dog Pose

Come back to Down Dog and inhale to extend your right leg back, keeping the quadriceps engaged and pressing through the heel of your right foot. Ground through your left foot, pressing into the left big-toe mound. Allow the shoulders and hips to remain level, without opening the body to the right.

Camakatrasana

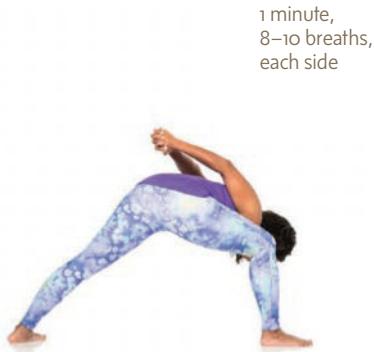
Wild Thing

Open your hips, stacking the right hip over the left. Bend your right knee and eventually place the ball of your right foot on the ground behind you, turning your hips and chest toward the ceiling. Keep pressing through all four corners of the left palm and extend the right arm alongside your right ear. Inhale back to Three-Legged Down Dog, and exhale to Down Dog.



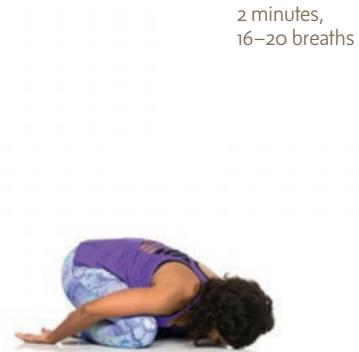
Virabhadrasana II Warrior Pose II

Come off your back knee. Pivot your back heel and plant your left foot at about a 30-degree angle. If you draw a line back from your right heel, it should intersect your left arch. Inhale to lift your torso and cartwheel your arms open, bringing them parallel to the ground. Externally rotate your shoulders and extend through your fingertips. Drink in breath as you expand through your rib cage. Pour the breath out as you move deeply into your hips, bringing your right thigh parallel to the ground.



Warrior Pose II, variation

Exhale to extend your arms behind the back and interlace your fingers. Externally rotate the shoulders and drink in, filling the rib cage and lifting the heart. Exhale to softly fold forward and pour out, surrendering toward the earth. If you feel strain in your hamstrings, only fold forward as much as is comfortable. To finish, inhale to return to Warrior II.



Balasana Child's Pose

Exhale to Plank; dropping to your knees, open knees to the width of the mat. Bring your big toes together and slowly exhale, reaching your hips toward your heels and ankles as you fold forward and extend your arms alongside your hips. As you inhale, allow your rib cage to expand. As you exhale, soften through the heart and ground through the hips. After a minute, inhale to a seated pose.

OR, HAVE 10 MORE MINUTES? EXTEND YOUR SEQUENCE WITH THE NEXT 6 POSES.

OUR PRO Teacher and model **Chelsea Jackson, PhD**, has a 200-hour hatha yoga training from Kashi Atlanta Urban Yoga Ashram, where she studied with Ma Jaya, creator of the "drink as you pour" concept. Jackson is also certified by Yoga Ed to teach yoga to children, and earned her PhD from the Division of Educational Studies at Emory University in Atlanta. She founded *chelsealovesyoga.com*, a platform for discussion on yoga, race, and diversity; is a member of the Yoga and Body Image Coalition; and created the Yoga, Literature & Art Camp for teen girls.



Balasana Child's Pose

Exhale to Plank; dropping to your knees, open knees to the width of the mat. Bring the big toes together and slowly exhale, reaching your hips toward your heels and ankles as you fold forward and extend your arms alongside your hips. As you inhale, allow your rib cage to expand. As you exhale, soften through the heart and ground through the hips. After a minute, inhale to come up to a seated pose.



Setu Bandhasana

Bridge Pose

Lower to your back. Bend your knees, placing the soles of your feet under them. Press into your feet and inhale to lift the hips and open the heart. Interlace your fingers, pressing your hands down. Inhale, expand through the ribs; exhale, surrender your heart to service. If your knees splay, place a block between your thighs and squeeze. Exhale, release your hands and lower down.



Savasana Corpse Pose

Extend both legs and lie comfortably on your mat, turning the palms open. Press the back of the head into the ground as you deeply inhale and focus on drinking in, or filling up. On an exhalation, gently close your eyes and soften, placing your intention on pouring out, or offering unconditional love. Observe the breath as you absorb the benefits of this practice. If it is more comfortable, use a folded blanket under your torso and head.



Coastal karma

Combining stand-up paddle-boarding and yoga on Portugal's beautiful coast. By Emily McAuliffe



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: EMILY MC'AULIFFE; KARMA RETREATS; KARMA RETREATS BY ANDREA RAUH; EMILY MC'AULIFFE. MAIN IMAGE MANUKOV/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

I START MY WEEK OF BLISS IN A GRIDLOCK. A political event in Lisbon has traffic backed up for kilometres, and frustrated locals honk impatiently as my driver crawls out of the city at a snail's pace. A good 30 minutes pass before we're released from the congestion to speed along the highway to Malveira da Serra, a ritzy area of Portugal perched in the hills above the coastal stretch of Cascais.

Upon stepping into the villa that will become my home for the next week, I find a view that no photo could do justice. Behind the glass of the floor to ceiling windows is a 180-degree outlook of the township below as it stretches out to sea. There's no discernable horizon, just sky blue fading to azure. The peaceful villa is where I'll spend my mornings and evenings practicing yoga and meditation, while my days will be spent admiring the coastline from the vantage point of a stand-up paddleboard. I feel relaxed just thinking about it.

A warm welcome

Throwing in your job in search of a better lifestyle isn't for the faint-hearted, but it's a leap primary school friends Timo Janitzki and Jens Kielmann decided to take after daydreaming about starting a business together. Avid surfers, the duo brainstormed ways to share their love of Portuguese surf culture with the world, and the idea of the Karma surf and yoga experience was born.

"Our initial focus was yoga and surfing, but last year we decided to expand our activities to include hiking, mountain biking and stand-up paddle boarding to take

advantage of the range of activities suited to this area," says Timo, as we share a traditional Portuguese seafood lunch of buttery clams and sopa de peixe (fish stew) on the deck.

With laughter and clinking glasses, the seven other guests and I enjoy the company of the staff and their friends, and it's clear the retreat has nailed the balance of health and mindfulness with a little indulgence.

Local exploration

Given the villa is surrounded by the magical landscape of Serra de Sintra, it would be remiss to not take some time to explore the local surrounds. So, as Sunday is reserved as a free day, the other guests and I pile into a taxi to make the 20-minute journey to the UNESCO World Heritage area of Sintra. As we enter the gates of Quinta da Regaleira, a gothic mansion set against a backdrop of dense green foliage appears, beckoning us to peer through its windows to appreciate the sheer scale of the park.

With 85 hectares of land to traverse, we easily spend the day wandering the endless paths that twist through the trees and dark grottoes, and by the end, we're well and truly warmed up to the daily physical activity that lies ahead.

Salute the sun

After being woken by the sprightly chirps of a bird outside my window, I head to the retreat's newly constructed 'tree-house' yoga studio—a glass-front cabin overlooking the lush landscape of Malveira da Serra. Here,



lighthouse in Cascais. Guests staying at Guincho Villa can go there in 15mins by car.



“The water turns a brilliant green—the view is a meditation in itself.”



From top: Yoga at Guincho Villa; SUP at the Algarve (southcoast); Living room - Guincho Villa.

we're met by Silvia, an ashtanga instructor who has been teaching at the retreat since it opened three years ago.

Our group has mixed yoga experience, including a few first-time yogi husbands who have been lured into yoga with the promise of surfing by their wives, so Silvia carefully adapts poses to suit each individual, with cranky knees and lower backs well catered for. As our hour-long practice draws to a close, sun streams into the studio, and its warm rays serve as a welcome invitation for a day at the beautiful beach.

Water workouts

While the other guests head to the surf beaches to tackle the waves, I'm sold on Karma's new stand-up paddle (SUP) option, offered in the calm bay of Praia da Duquesa. Welshman Nick Evans, who runs the Cascais Surf 'n' Paddle school, meets me at the beach and invites me to join a class with local instructor, Diogo, who spices up the paddling with some Shakira-style dance moves to test our balance.

Given I already have paddling experience, Diogo offers to take me on a coastal cruise to a quiet bay marked by the iconic Santa Marta lighthouse. My feet grip the board as we paddle away from the shore and negotiate the rock of the waves as they hit the concrete wall bordering the marina. Even on a cloudy day, the ocean is a translucent deep blue, and the surface glitters as hundreds of fish pop their heads up around us. As we round the lighthouse, there's a sudden calm and the water turns a brilliant green—the view is a meditation in itself. We take a quiet

PHOTOS: ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF KARMA RETREATS; PADDLE BOARDING BY JAMES OWENS; BEDROOM BY KOLJA FRASE



Praia Castelojo – a beach at the Algarve (west coast)

moment to sit on our boards and watch fish burrow into the deep crevices of the rocks before a puff of wind disturbs the water, reminding us to head back.

Finding calm

After laying my board on the soft sand I sit with legs swinging over the concrete ledge separating the SUP school from the beach to eat my pre-packed quinoa salad, before my driver takes me back to the villa.

Walking up the steps to the house, I can see the other guests dotted around the garden, sleeping in gently swinging hammocks or curled up on a beanbag with a book.

The opportunity to rest is welcomed before the afternoon yoga class, taken by veteran instructor Annett, who, like her mother before her, follows the strict teachings of Iyengar yoga.

We roll out our mats on the terrace as the sun begins its slow descent into the soft blue ocean, and spend the class working on the seemingly simple poses of Tadasana and Adho Mukha Svanasana, or downward-facing dog. As we push our tailbones to the sky and stretch our paddle-weary shoulders, Annett stresses the importance of always striving to perfect our technique. “Even after instructing for 20 years, there’s still more I can learn in these poses,” she says. “In yoga, you never stop learning.” ☺



Suite 2 – Guincho Villa

Fact file

WEBSITE: karmasurfretrat.com

WHERE: Malveira da Serra, 35 kilometres west of Lisbon, and in Portugal’s southern Algarve region, 16 kilometres west of Lagos.

COST: Shared and single rooms are available in both locations with prices ranging from 849 - 1049 euros per person depending on the season.

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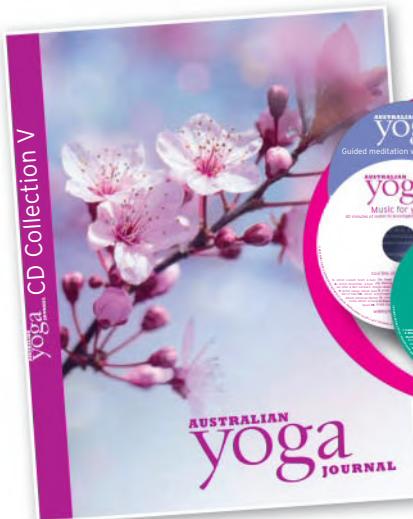


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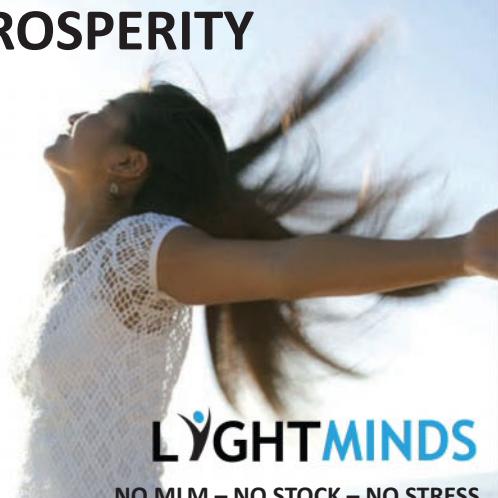
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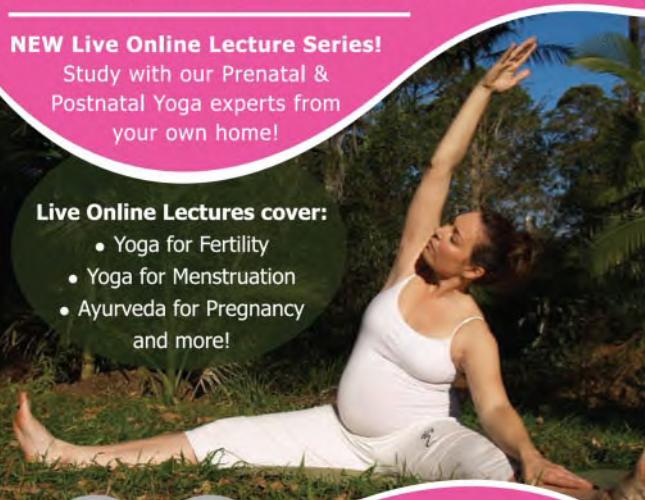
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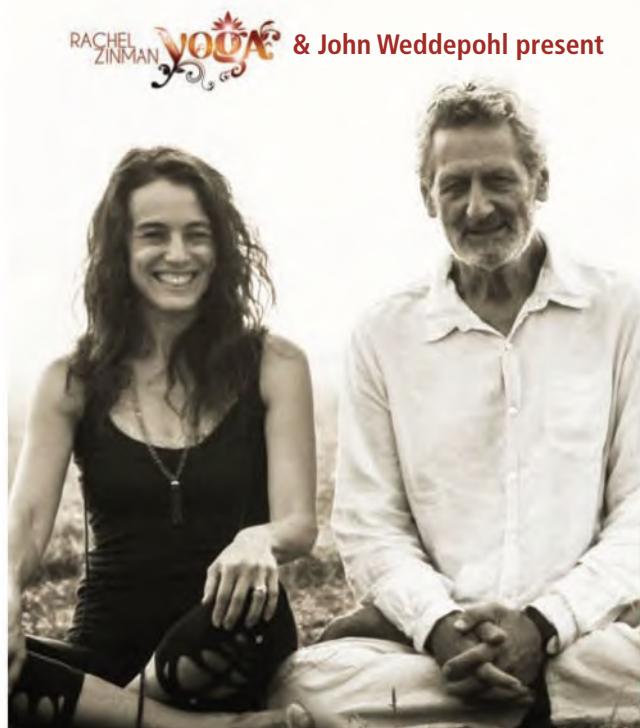
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ON SALE 10TH SEPTEMBER

INSIDE

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Distance Education

Margaret and Glenn Ceresoli are one of Australia's premier yoga teacher couples. They began practicing yoga in 1979 and started teaching together in 1986 at the Action School of Yoga in Melbourne. In Melbourne they experienced a spiritual change and moved to Uki for eight years before making Sydney their base in 2005. Today they spend most of the year apart, Glenn teaching overseas and Margaret teaching in Sydney. They say people are curious about how they can spend so much time apart yet still have a strong relationship.

By Tamsin Angus-Leppan

How did you meet?

Margaret: we met through a mutual friend who had told me to come to his Iyengar class and Glenn and I met in that class. At the end of '85 Shandor Remete passed the school on to us and we ran it for about 20 years.

What prompted you to leave Melbourne?

Margaret: Having become a mother and not being able to practice and not being able to go to India and do the things Glenn was able to do, I felt deprived. Then we met a spiritual teacher in Melbourne who was a friend, a sister, everything. She taught us the living example of spirituality as unconditional love. She and her family were an example to us. Having contact on a personal level with someone refined it into a very practical way of living life and how to bring up your kids. She showed me you are not missing out, it is all here but you have to bring it to the fore. Even my ability to subsume a little bit of my angst about feeling deprived, that helped me see if I could view it differently, I wouldn't get personally so disappointed or angry and I felt a sense of fulfilment a little bit more. I know many people that practice all

the time but [unconditional love] is not present in their lives, it's not present in their relationship or with their children.

Glenn: That meeting (with the spiritual teacher) was a huge influence and it's that which we took to Uki with us. We wanted to move away from the career stuff and take some quiet time to imbibe what we had been exposed to. We went to Uki in 1997 and then came to Sydney in 2005. We said let's pass the school in Melbourne on to the students there and then we didn't find the circumstances we were looking for in Sydney in terms of opening a yoga studio. In the meantime I was accepting more and more invites from overseas and Margaret started teaching some classes in Sydney.

How do you manage now with so much time apart?

Glenn: We sacrifice being together a lot, a normal relationship wouldn't survive that. Relationships are part of the big failure in society, people are really struggling to hold onto a relationship. For two months of the year Margaret joins me overseas and we get feedback that when we are together there as a couple, people get a lot out of seeing us together. People see that there's a relationship taking place, that there's a harmony in that relationship.

Margaret: We've had 24/7 together at times, like in Uki, and now we've had this time when we are apart mostly. We have this other spiritual dimension that always pulls us together. A lot of relationships are based on a mutual dependency, where you meet a need for me and you become a substitute for something. I feel very strongly that because we spend a lot of time apart that we can stand alone, but we are together. What people don't see in yoga is couples, or families. They see us as human beings, what they get is very practical, very down to earth, it's all integrated in our lives. I had not thought about that dimension, until we got that feedback: we balance each other out and students feel that in our teaching. ☺

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